

PRESS RELEASE

Fluoride toothpaste helps prevent tooth decay confirm leading experts from stomatology

BEIJING, 19 September 2007 – More than 70 experts in stomatology gathered at a conference on "Oral Health through Fluoride for China and Southeast Asia" on September 18-19, 2007, in Beijing, China. The conference was jointly organised by the World Health Organization (WHO), the FDI World Dental Federation, the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) and the Chinese Stomatological Association (CSA).

The stomatological experts confirmed in a final conference declaration that fluoride toothpaste remains the most widespread and significant form of prevention of and protection against tooth decay used worldwide. It is also the most rigorously evaluated vehicle for fluoride use.

Dr Lingzhi Kong, Vice Director of the Bureau of Disease Prevention and Control, Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China, welcomed participants and said, "access to affordable fluoride is a human right for all citizens in China".

Amongst those present at the conference were Prof Ramon Baez, representing the WHO Global Oral Health Programme in Geneva, Dr Michèle Aerden, President of the FDI, Prof J.M. ten Cate, President-Elect of the IADR and Prof Luan Wenmin, Vice President of the CSA. Other Chinese and regional participants included representatives from the Dept of Preventative Dentistry, professors from various schools and universities of stomatology and public health professionals from the Department of Chronic Disease Control and Prevention.

"During the WHO's World Health Assembly in May, Member States adopted a resolution on oral health, which urged the establishment of national plans for the use of fluoride based on appropriate programmes for automatic administration through drinking water, salt or milk, or topical use, such as affordable toothpaste," said Prof Baez, WHO representative. "We hope that this conference will invigorate those in China and Southeast Asia to move the agenda item forward."

"Fluoride for dental health has been proven to be one of the most effective public health measures known in the 20th century," said Dr. Aerden, President of FDI. "The implementation of affordable access and appropriate exposure to fluoride has been successful in many parts of the world. We hope that this conference in China will encourage Chinese dental professionals to work in partnership with all stakeholders including the government and health organisations to promote the benefits of fluoride toothpastes to the public."

"Researchers in IADR have studied fluoride efficacy and safety for more than 70 years and concluded that optimal levels of fluoride prevent dental caries and is the most realistic way to improve oral health on a worldwide scale," added Prof ten Cate, President-Elect of IADR.

The Need in China is Great

The usage of fluoride toothpastes is widely endorsed by professional stomatological organisations worldwide. The CSA joined the WHO, FDI and IADR in this follow-up conference to last year's "Global Consultation on Oral Health through Fluoride" held at the WHO Headquarters to reaffirm its safety and efficacy. The CSA recognises fluoridated toothpastes as an effective, yet economical, way to prevent dental caries in China.

According to the latest figures from the CSA, dental caries in China remains a pressing issue with the caries rate being 77% for deciduous teeth and up to 65% for permanent teeth. "While there has been significant improvement over the past decade, dental caries is still one of the most prevalent oral diseases in China," said Prof Luan. "Fluoride toothpastes are safe for daily usage by all adults and children. We hope that the promotion of fluoride toothpastes by dental professionals will reduce this problem and significantly improve overall Chinese oral health in the long run."

About WHO

WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends, visit www.who.int.

About FDI World Dental Federation

The FDI World Dental Federation is the worldwide, authoritative and independent voice of dentistry. With more than 130 national dental associations in more than 125 countries around the world, it represents nearly one million dentists internationally. For more information about the FDI, please visit the FDI website at www.fdiworldental.org.

About IADR

The International Association for Dental Research, headquartered in Alexandria, VA in the United States is a non-profit organization with more than 11,000 members worldwide. Its mission is: (1) to advance research and increase knowledge for the improvement of oral health worldwide; (2) to support and represent the oral health research community; and (3) to facilitate the communication and application of research findings. For more information please visit www.iadr.org.

About CSA

The Chinese Stomatological Association (CSA) is an independent academic organization made up of scientific and technological personnel in the field of Stomatology. The CSA is a legal body. It was preciously known as the Stomatological Society of the Chinese Medical Association established in 1951.