

Oral health and general health: a call for collaborative approach

At the 101st FDI Annual World Dental Congress in Istanbul, Turkey, from 28-31 August 2013 the FDI General Assembly made the following declaration.

- To strongly defend oral health as a fundamental human right and an integrated part of general health and well-being, and:

Considering that

- Dental caries and periodontal disease are among the most common and important global oral health burdens (caries and periodontal disease affecting over 90% of the world population), and oral cancer is the eighth most common cancer responsible for 400,000 to 700,000 deaths a year globally.
- Scientific evidence shows a significant association of oral diseases with systemic diseases or disorders. NCDs, such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular, respiratory and oral diseases, share common risk factors including unhealthy diet, tobacco usage and excessive consumption of alcohol. It is therefore crucial to have a multidisciplinary approach and further improved collaboration between the dental, medical and other health care professions.
- 36 million people die every year from NCDs, and 86% of the premature deaths occur in developing countries. Dentists, besides advocating for and promoting oral health, are committed to taking more responsibility in contributing to the improvement of general health and quality of life and wellbeing of individual patients and the public at large. In line with the FDI Vision 2020, dentists are willing to support the WHO NCD Action Plan 2013-2020 and play a key role in achieving its objectives.

Call upon

- FDI and its member associations to support a broadened scope of practice for dentists and underline the need for dentists to expand their role and responsibilities for improving the general health and well-being of the community they serve.

and further call upon

- National, regional and global health leaders to recognize oral health as an essential component of global health and promote a reinforced inter-professional collaborative approach in the development of global and national policies.