

The 16th International Symposium on Dental Hygiene will be held in Madrid on July 8–11. In connection with the symposium, the Federation will also conduct a meeting of the governing body of the International Federation of Dental Hygiene (IFDH), the House of Delegates (HoD). We envisage that all 23 member associations will be represented, and IFDH will welcome new member countries. This meeting will also represent the conclusion of my term as President of the IFDH. The 3-year term of office as President has been both an exciting and interesting experience. I have had the privilege of working with a very competent team: Angela Fundak as Secretary/Treasurer, Sue Aldenhoven as President-elect and Marianne Corbey Verheggen as Vice President. In addition, I have enjoyed the opportunity to develop closer relationships with all delegates and other professionals who are interested in international collaboration.

During my presentation as incoming President at the closing ceremony of the 15th International Symposium on Dental Hygiene in Sydney, Australia, I emphasised the importance of an increased level of recognition as independent health professionals, based on a well-established education, with the option for postgraduate education such as a Master and Doctorate degree. Now, at the conclusion of my term of office, I am very fortunate to share with my colleagues the realisation of these goals. During this term of office, we have been in receipt of the very first *International Journal of Dental Hygiene*. The appointed editor, Marjolijn Hovius, has provided a strong foundation for the ongoing development of the official journal of the IFDH. This is a very important step forward for the profession as the journal provides an excellent resource to share information, publish current research, as well as other relevant information. The IFDH web site content has also improved significantly, and much of the information regarding dental hygiene internationally can be found via this medium. This valuable resource has further potential of being the main source for information for the House of Delegates.

The 2-, 3- and 4-year education programmes developed by the IFDH Education Committee, which were adopted in Sydney and published in *IJDH*, have been sent to different countries and presented at meetings. Another goal of this term of office has been achieved via the commitment of the IFDH Oral Health Promotion Committee. The 'IFDH Day' has been conducted in 2002 and 2003, with many member countries implementing successful activities to highlight the profession of dental hygiene.

A focus on the field of study based on research by dental hygienists was another vision that was recognised as a goal for the

term of office 2001–2003. We have many opportunities to develop this vision via events, such as the International Symposia on Dental Hygiene. The symposia are very important for both the Federation and the dental hygiene community, not only to present research, but also to share knowledge and make contacts with colleagues and friends from around the world. Exchanging ideas with dental hygienists from other countries also provides valuable insight and experience to assist in the development of your own work in both your national association and clinical practice.

The IFDH also recognised the need for a code of ethics as an obvious component to become an acknowledged profession. The IFDH Ethics Committee will present a proposal for an international code of ethics during the House of Delegates meeting (preceding the 16th International Symposium of Dental Hygiene in Madrid). If the proposal is adopted, the IFDH Code of Ethics will be in place towards the end of 2004.

Another major achievement of this term of office has been the successful collaboration with other health organisations and companies. The IFDH has been successful in arranging joint scientific sessions at major meetings, such as the tri-annual meeting of the European Federation of Periodontology (EuroPerio 4 2003). The session was developed in collaboration with the publisher of the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene*, Blackwell Munksgaard, who generously donated their symposium session to the IFDH. Also, during Federation Dentaire Internationale 2003, the IFDH presented a scientific session in collaboration with the member country, the Dental Hygienists Association of Australia. At the International Association of Dental Research meetings, the President has been recognised at the opening ceremonies. From these experiences, we understand the impact of IFDH attendance and presentation at these meetings. Where possible, the IFDH needs to be visible and present at all major meetings of the dental profession. Also, during this term, many member countries have invited officers from the EC, and we have succeeded in being present at annual national scientific meetings. This has been an excellent opportunity for collaboration internationally.

In conclusion, as the new term of office for the IFDH begins following the House of Delegates meeting in Madrid, I will take this opportunity to wish the new President and her Executive Committee all the success in their forthcoming mission to realise their goals of developing the global profession of dental hygiene.

Kerstin Öhrn
President IFDH

Copyright of International Journal of Dental Hygiene is the property of Blackwell Publishing Limited and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.

Copyright of International Journal of Dental Hygiene is the property of Wiley-Blackwell and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.