

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Welcome friends and colleagues to the latest edition of the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene*. Once again our editorial team have compiled a diverse range of papers that encompass the global nature and diversity of the profession of dental hygiene.

The scope of dental hygiene enables us to provide preventive oral health services to all age groups and in this edition we have two very interesting papers, one addressing 'Dental anxiety in children and the relationship to dental caries and gingival health' and the other, 'Awareness of periodontal disease among pregnant women in Jordan'.

Dental hygienists no longer work solely in the traditional settings of yesteryear. Community needs and oral health directions have seen a move from the traditional role in private practice into community and outreach programmes.

It is interesting to read the outcomes of the study on 'Tooth loss among habitual chewing stick and plastic toothbrush users in Tanzania'. Research such as this provides an invaluable resource when developing an oral health programme for specific groups.

Education is the key to promoting changes in oral health habits. A key role of the dental hygienist is to empower patients to take responsibility for their own oral health by employing effective oral hygiene practices on a daily basis. To

assist in our endeavours there are many educational resources available to the profession and now our patients can access oral health information via the worldwide web.

As oral health professionals, we need to ensure we are familiar with resources available to our patients in order for us to be able to discuss any questions raised. 'The use of the internet to access oral health related information by patients attending dental hygiene clinics' highlights the need for dental hygienists to be up to date.

'Work stress and burnout among dental hygienists' is a sad reality and I am very pleased to read the article in this edition, which addresses this very serious issue. If we can have a better understanding of the background, signs and symptoms we can implement preventive strategies more effectively to overcome this. The dental hygiene workforce is so very highly trained and invaluable to the oral health of the community we need to ensure we protect this valuable resource and care for the well being of our colleagues.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene* and wish you well in 2005.

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