

Dear friends and colleagues

Welcome to volume 4, issue 4 of the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene*. As we have become accustomed to expect, our editorial team has presented us with another quality edition that is relevant to our professional practice as a dental hygienist.

Dental hygiene practice is varied and diverse providing preventive oral health services to all age cohorts within our community. This diversity is reflected in the articles reported in this edition from studies conducted on young mothers to institutionalized elderly. Additionally, the possibility of using dental operators to monitor systemic disease is presented as well as the efficacy of manual versus power brushes.

One of the most common issues that concern our patients is malodour. It is not uncommon for them to report a perception that it impacts negatively on their social and professional lives as well as being a source of embarrassment. The article 'Oral hygiene practices, periodontal conditions, dentition status and self-reported bad mouth breath among young mothers, Tanzania' provides an insight into the causes of bad breath, its correlation to periodontal and hard tissue status as well as recommendations for future research and clinical interventions.

Earlier, I spoke of the diversity of dental hygiene practice and in the following article 'Oral health in Florida nursing homes' the great need for dental hygienists to work in this specialized area of dental hygiene practice is highlighted. With advancements in medical and dental science, people are not only living longer but also are retaining their teeth longer. Globally we now see an increasing number of dentate or partially dentate elderly. As health status changes, the elderly are moving from self-determined independent living to dependent institutionalized living where they are reliant on care givers for all their daily care including oral care.

It is vital for the overall health and well-being of the elderly that they receive effective oral health care daily. Provision of this care in most instances is by carers, however, it is disturbing to read that this is not always a priority. Whether this is

because of carer attitude to oral health or a heavy workload, there is a need for the provision of education programs for carers so they can provide the essential oral health care required for the health and well-being of the people in their care. The article acknowledges the role of the dental hygienist in the provision of care to the elderly in nursing homes and to the provision of education programs for carers.

'Screening for type 2 diabetes mellitus using gingival crevicular blood' is an article from our colleagues in Jordan that introduces the possibility of using dental operators (dental hygienists) as a public health measure to screen patients for type 2 diabetes mellitus. The article concluded that blood glucose levels in blood obtained from the finger puncture method and blood present in gingival crevicular fluid during scaling and debridement were almost identical. As it is not cost-effective to screen the community as a whole, it is logical, because of the correlation between diabetes and periodontal disease, to use dental clinics to screen for diabetes. Early detection is desirable and by incorporating screening as part of the dental hygienist appointment, undiagnosed disease may be detected early which would result in a positive outcome for the community. The testing procedure requires further development but the initial study is very encouraging.

Nowadays there is a plethora of oral care products available to our patients and inevitably they seek our opinion and recommendation. As clinicians, we must keep up-to-date on what is available commercially and the claims made in advertising. Equally we must keep our knowledge up-to-date and the article on manual versus powered toothbrushes provides us with the evidence to provide sound advice to our patients.

I trust you will enjoy this issue of the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene* and find the articles as interesting and stimulating as I did.

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