

Dear friends and colleagues

Welcome to the second issue of the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene* for 2007. This issue marks a special occasion in my professional career, as it will be the last time I write to you in my capacity as President of the International Federation of Dental Hygiene.

This year also marks another milestone in the calendar of the IFDH. Our friends and colleagues of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association are hosting the 17th International Symposium on Dental Hygiene, 19–21 July in Toronto, Canada. The theme *The Many Cultures of Dental Hygiene* not only reflects the multicultural Canadian population but also the global membership of the Federation. I hope many of you are able to attend, as it will be the most empowering and rewarding experience of your career.

Once again, our Editorial team, under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Marjolijn Hovius, have produced another quality issue of diverse and topical research. Topical, in that it looks at attitudes towards dental hygienists; to diverse, in that it reports on the results of a study on garlic.

Articles specific to dental hygiene practice are not that common and I was particularly interested to read the article by our Swedish colleagues *Attitudes to dental hygienists: evaluation of the Dental Hygienist Beliefs Survey in a Swedish population of patients and students*. There is a plethora of data that reports on patient attitudes to dentists, but this survey is specific to dental hygiene and as such is a powerful tool not only for our profession but for us as individuals to use to critically reflect on our daily practice, patient interaction, patient management and the importance of building a trusting relationship with those for whom we provide care by recognizing and addressing their concerns.

Lifelong professional development is an ethical obligation, but busy lives and lack of access to dental libraries often restrict activities such as journal research. It is therefore through articles such as *Comparison of manual versus sonic and*

ultrasonic toothbrushes: a review, that as clinicians and educators we benefit from the research of others to improve our knowledge and enhance our practice of dental hygiene.

Self-reported oral problems compared with clinical assessment in an epidemiological study reports on the usefulness and cost/time effectiveness of using a questionnaire to assess risk factors for systemic diseases but, specifically in this article, periodontal disease. Periodontal clinical assessment was carried out after completion of the survey document and it was reported that bleeding gums is the most significant oral problem that indicates periodontal disease. Although such strategies are useful for conducting research and epidemiological studies, there is potential for adopting these strategies into public and private dental clinics.

Garlic has long been known as 'nature's antibiotic' and I was interested to read the article *Antimicrobial activity of garlic against oral streptococci*. I have great admiration for those who volunteered for the study, as the reported side-effects were particularly unpleasant. The antimicrobial and anticarcinogenic properties of garlic against oral streptococci were reported. Use of such a widely available, natural and inexpensive substance to fight decay would be of great benefit to the global community and it is hoped that further research will be conducted to address the issue of the unpleasant side-effects thus making it a more viable option in the prevention of caries on a population scale.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for your support and readership of the journal. A profession is measured by its organization, activities, codes and publications and the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene* reflects the professionalism of dental hygiene on the world arena.

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