



Celebrating 100 years of dental hygiene 1913–2013

2013 will mark the 100th year anniversary of the profession of dental hygiene. There will be many global events to honour this centennial, including in Israel, the USA, and of course, the International Symposium on Dental Hygiene (ISDH) August 14–17, 2013, in Cape Town, South Africa (<http://www.embassyconferences.co.za/portfolio/present/19th-international-symposium-on-dental-hygiene/10>, accessed 11 September 2012). The organizing committee is well on their way to producing a wonderful event. This event is co-hosted by the International Federation of Dental Hygienists (IFDH) and the Oral Hygienists Association of South Africa (OHASA). The theme is 'Oral Health – Vital Link In Achieving Total Health', and emphasis will be placed on setting and attaining oral health goals and the role of the dental hygienists in health-care delivery.

The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA's) 2013 Center for Lifelong Learning, at the 90th ADHA Annual Session, will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, June 19–25, 2013. There will be an International Track for global participants (http://www.adha.org/annualsession2012/2013_info.htm, accessed 11 September 2012). Join the ADHA at their celebration to see environmental activist Erin Brockovich, actress Debbie Reynolds, and actress and activist, Geena Davis.

As we approach the 100-year anniversary of the profession, we must reflect on our past and the research infrastructure that is necessary to build the body of knowledge to support dental hygiene practice. To this end, we must promote research to support dental hygiene practice. The challenges of global healthcare, including oral health, have created much discussion in the last number of years and have been the centre of a worldwide debate. The IFDH is developing a 'Research Exchange' page on the IFDH website (<http://www.ifdh.org>, accessed 11 September 2012). There is the also National Center for Dental Hygiene Research & Practice (NCDHRP or Center), which is a connection to research resources that support dental hygiene education, practice and research (<http://dent-web01.usc.edu/dhnet/>, accessed 11 September 2012).

We should also be looking at technologies for global health. Technology for health is broader than health technology and is directly focused on health needs (1). WHO defines health technology as 'devices, drugs, medical, and surgical procedures, and the knowledge associated with these, used in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease as well as in rehabilitation, and the organizational and supportive systems within which care is provided' (2). Accessibility of health technology is inversely related to health need. Although health-care systems in high-income countries make extensive use of technology, people in the world's poorest countries often lack the most basic essential drugs and devices (1). 'The oral disease and needs of populations are in transition and oral health systems and scientific knowledge are changing rapidly. In order to meet these challenges effectively public health-care administrators and decision makers need the tools, capacity and information to assess and monitor health needs, choose intervention strategies, design policy options appropriate to their own circumstances, and to improve the performance of the oral health system' (http://www.who.int/oral_health/action/information/surveillance/en/index1.html, accessed 11 September 2012). As information systems are being established for surveillance of global trends in oral disease and risk factors, the IFDH will stay abreast of these developments.

References

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