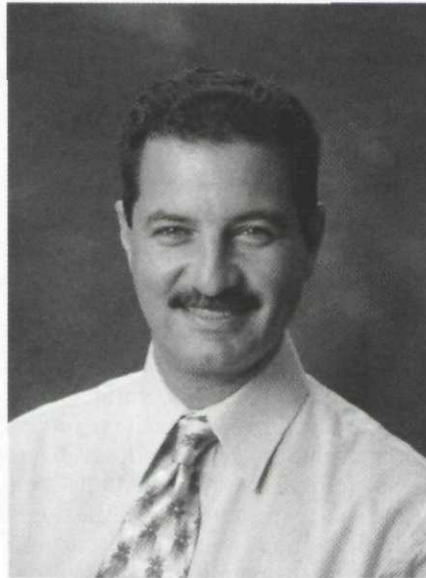


2004 AAPHD Distinguished Service Award: Scott L. Tomar, DMD, DrPH

Presented by William R. Maas, DDS, MPH

The AAPHD Distinguished Service Award is AAPHD's highest award, and is presented to an individual in recognition of excellent and distinguished service to public health dentistry. This year's recipient is Dr. Scott L. Tomar. Dr. Tomar is an associate professor in the Division of Public Health Services and Research at the University of Florida College of Dentistry. It is somewhat unusual, I think, to present someone a distinguished service award when he isn't even a full professor, and when it is clear that he will contribute so much more in a career certain to become even more distinguished in the coming years. However, I am pleased that AAPHD has decided to take this occasion to recognize Dr. Tomar for his service not only to public health dentistry, as a field, but to AAPHD as an organization.

Like many oral epidemiologists, Scott's research interests involve the understanding and control of modifiable risk factors for oral diseases in populations. Scott received his dental training at Temple, received his MPH from Columbia, and then earned a doctorate in public health from the University of Michigan. Thereafter, however, he underwent a training experience that only a few dentists have accomplished, as an epidemiologic intelligence service officer at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in its Office on Smoking and Health. Since then, a primary area of interest has been tobacco use and its effects on oral health. His research in this area has included tobacco-associated oral diseases, the epidemiology of tobacco use, and improving the outcomes for people with oral cancer. But cancer is not the only oral disease associated with tobacco use. Scott's research quantified the contributions of smoking to periodontal disease, an oral health problem much more common than cancer. In 2000, just a few weeks before release of the surgeon general's report on oral health, the *Journal of Periodontology* published an analysis of



Dr. Scott L. Tomar

NHANES III data conducted by Scott and Samira Asma, which concluded that half of the cases of periodontal disease in the United States were attributable to smoking. That was, I think, a unique contribution.

Dr. Tomar is also involved in the training and development of the public health workforce and helping the dental community understand public health issues. It was Scott who conducted an assessment of dental public health infrastructure in the United States, under contract from NIDCR, which is providing objective data to inform the efforts of AAPHD and ASTDD in developing the dental public health workforce.

If you go to Scott's faculty page on the University of Florida Web site, you will note that he highlights the fact that service is part of the name of his division. He notes that it has been his privilege to serve the profession and public in a number of capacities. He has served as a consultant for a number of agencies and organizations, including the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health,

and the Florida Comprehensive Cancer Control Initiative.

But I must say that it has been our privilege, particularly as members of AAPHD, to have benefited from Scott's service. From 1996–2000, Scott was a member of the Executive Council, during which time he co-chaired the Oral Health and Policy Committee. As soon as he left the Executive Council, he set an example for other association members by joining one of the working committees, the Communications Committee, in 2001—and he continues to serve on it today.

Even before that, however, in 2000 he assumed responsibility for the most visible representation of public health dentistry, certainly the scientific basis for public health dentistry, as editor of the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*, the official journal of AAPHD, a post he will be leaving later this summer.

AAPHD has been blessed to have had many outstanding editors of our journal over time, all of whom have contributed to its status as one of the most respected publications in dentistry. Scott has continued that tradition of excellence. By bringing issues to the Executive Council, and working with them to leverage improvements in our ability to assure prompt delivery to our subscribers all over the world and increased sources of financial support, the size of each issue has been increased, and a special issue to record the National Oral Health Conference has been added. Consequently, Scott has been able to bring manuscripts to publication with significantly shorter publication lag time. This both makes the journal more attractive to contributing authors and gets the new scientific information out to us users sooner.

In recognition of Scott Tomar's scientific contributions to public health and dentistry, as well as his service to the American Association of Public Health Dentistry, I am pleased to present him our Distinguished Service Award.

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