

## 2003 AAPHD Special Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Dentistry—International: Aubrey Sheiham, BDS, PhD, DHC

Presented by William R. Maas, DDS, MPH

The AAPHD International Special Merit Award is presented to an individual in recognition of their contributions to public health dentistry outside of the United States. This year's recipient is Professor Aubrey Sheiham. Dr. Sheiham is professor of dental public health, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Department of Dental Public Health, University College London Medical School in London, England.

Dr. Sheiham graduated in dentistry in South Africa and did his doctorate in epidemiology in London. His research has been conducted in a wide range of countries. In addition to epidemiologic studies in the United Kingdom, he has done research in Nigeria, Mexico, Mozambique, Indonesia, Thailand, Spain, Brazil, and the United States. Much of the work includes health services activities on promoting oral health. He has published over 240 papers, chapters in books, and one book. He coordinates a large postgraduate teaching program in dental public health, and has influenced many dental epidemiologists and researchers in the United States who studied with him or were otherwise mentored by him.

While much of his work is intended for dissemination and application in the United Kingdom and Europe, most of it is imminently useful for those of us in the United States. For example, at this National Oral Health Conference there is a session devoted to the issue of soft drinks and caries. Those of us who are interested in this topic would do well to read Dr. Sheiham's thorough review of the science base regarding nutrition and caries, which was published in 2001 in *Public Health Nutrition*, Europe's leading journal on this issue.

Those who subscribe to the Dental Public Health Listserv recognize the timely and insightful contributions he makes to those discussions. Just before

we left to attend this conference, we noted a message posted by Dr. Sheiham to share information indicating that the United Kingdom was set to abolish the six-month recall dental visit that has been a mainstay of the National Health Service for 50 years. Such a decision required persuasive expertise and perseverance to make the argument for more effective use of dental resources and the need to commission studies to test a more flexible recall system. Lessons learned in this transition should prove to be very informative to efforts to improve oral health care in the United States and throughout the world.

Dr. Sheiham is a past president of the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry and of the Oral Health Promotion Research Group.

He was awarded a *doctor honoris causa* by the University of Athens and the Distinguished Scientist award of the Behavioral Sciences and Health Services Research Group of the International Association for Dental Research in 1990 and again in 2001.

Today we are pleased to add one more honor to this list of recognition by presenting him the AAPHD Special Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Dentistry—International. Although Dr. Sheiham was unable to be here to receive this in person, a colleague from the United Kingdom, Dr. Cynthia Pine, is here today and has agreed to personally safeguard its transport back "over the pond" and present it to Dr. Sheiham at the earliest convenience.



Dr. Cynthia Pine receiving the Special Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Dentistry—International on behalf of Dr. Aubrey Sheiham