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Dentists' irritant named Allergen of the Year

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

SAN DIEGO, Calif., USA: A chemical compound associated with allergies in dental professionals has been announced Allergen of the Year by the American Contact Dermatitis Society in San Diego. The organisation chose acrylate, a polymer derived from acrylic acid, for the dubious title owing to its widespread occurrence in human environments and frequent reports on its irritant effects during manufacturing processes like denture making.

The allergenic potential of acrylates was first reported in the early 1950s. In addition to its use in dental primers, bonding agents and cements, different forms of the compound can be found in paint, orthopedic bone cement and artificial nails, among other products.

Dr Donald V. Belsito, former American Contact Dermatitis Society president and professor of Clinical Dermatology at Columbia University in New York, told reporters in San Diego that public exposure to acrylate is very low compared with exposure



Dental technicians are exposed to high concentrations of acrylates. (DTI/Photo Robert Kneschke, Germany)

among orthopaedic surgeons, dentists and manicurists. He said that those working in these professions should be aware of the hazards it poses and seek to limit routine exposure to this compound.

By testing dentists, dental nurses and technicians in 2007, researchers from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in Helsinki found that many had

developed contact allergies that could be traced back to two main forms of acrylate: 2-hydroxyethyl methacrylate used in dental adhesives and methyl methacrylate, which is found in high concentration in dental labs.

Similar results were reported by a clinical team at the Sahlgrenska University Hospital and Academy in Gothenburg in Sweden a few years ago.

Since the polymer can penetrate latex, vinyl gloves and even face masks through acrylate monomer vapour, dermatologists recommend that dentists use nitrile or 4H gloves as initial protection. Inside dental labs, local exhaust ventilation systems have demonstrated the potential to decrease the level of acrylate vapour in the working space of dental technicians significantly. [DTI](#)

Indonesia targets dental workers

New regulations implemented by the Ministry of Health in Indonesia have sparked nationwide protest by hundreds of dental workers. Effective from April, the law prohibits dental technicians and people working as "denture makers" from performing dental treatment on patients.

While Indonesia has tens of thousands of trained dentists and dental technicians, there are also many denture makers (known as *tukang gigi*) who offer dental procedures, including extractions and orthodontic treatment, without the proper training and for lower prices. The regulations aim to prevent these "street dentists" from operating in order to protect patients from poor treatment practices.

Dental technician associations have criticised the regulations, which they fear could put many dental workers out of business and reduce the opportunities for middle- and lower-income patients to receive dental treatment at all. The costs for dental procedures offered by a *tukang gigi* are usually four to five times lower than treatment by a regular dentist. [DTI](#)



This dental crown made for Elvis Presley by his dentist was recently auctioned together with a dental impression of the "King of Rock and Roll" to a Canadian dentist. (DTI/Photo courtesy of Omega Auctions, UK) ▶ WORLD NEWS, page 5

Face transplant successful

Dental and facial reconstructive surgeons in the US have reported to have managed to transplant an entire face onto a 37-year-old man. The procedure, which is considered to be the world's most extensive full-face transplant, included the transplantation of a tongue, teeth, as well as upper and lower jaw. [DTI](#)

Schein opens Dentrrix software

The US company Henry Schein has opened the latest version of its practice management platform Dentrrix to third-party developers. In addition, the world's largest provider of dental and healthcare devices said to have updated its Dentrrix Mobile application for iPad and Motorola Xoom tablets. [DTI](#)

Dental mid-life crisis found

Middle-aged women are most likely to suffer from fear of the dentist. Clinical observation of patients taking part in a multi-year clinical trial conducted at the Dental Phobia Clinic in Westmead, Sydney, has indicated that the level of dental anxiety is highest among women in their forties.

According to the researchers, this demographic was also found to have perceived a traumatic dental experience, including orofacial trauma, in the past and to be more prone to stress or mental disorders like depression. The results are intended to help investigate the relationship between dental anxiety and the perception of and coping with pain, as well as to develop strategies for managing the condition successfully.

Surveys have shown that compared with the general population, phobic patients wait more than five times longer to make a dental appointment. [DTI](#)



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Biologists find 'evolutionary bite' in prehistoric mammals

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

VICTORIA, Australia/SEATTLE, Wash., USA: Teeth could be one of the reasons that certain kinds of mammals were able to survive the dinosaurs. A recent discovery by researchers from Australia, Finland and the US found that the advanced shape of molars in multituberculates helped the prehistoric mammals to live through the mass extinction event that eradicated most of the earth's wildlife more than 60 million years ago.

By analysing over 40 teeth donated by palaeontologists from all over the world through 3-D software developed by Dr Alistair Evans from Monash University near Victoria, Australia, they found that in contrast to their evolutionary relatives, multituberculates were anatomically able to consume plants that emerged approximately 90 million years ago during the late Cretaceous period. The more diversified diet not only allowed them to grow in size and number, but also gave them a significant advantage over other mammals with more primitive teeth that had to compete with dinosaurs for the same food resources.

Evans, who began his research in cooperation with University of Washington biologist Greg Wilson in 2007, told *Dental Tribune Asia Pacific* that the study's findings confirm recent theories proposing that certain mammals were able to diversify while living alongside non-avian dinosaurs. He said that the findings could clarify a number of issues with regard to current



An artist's conception depicts a multituberculate in its natural habitat at the time of the dinosaurs. (DTI/Photo courtesy of Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture/Jude Swales, USA)

knowledge about the evolutionary history of mammals but would not have any effect on theories about the evolution of man.

"We can't really know how the history of the rest of mammals would have been different if multituberculates had not had a similar adaptive radiation. Multituberculates are on a very different branch of the evolutionary tree to humans so there would not be any direct relationship between their evolutionary history and ours," Evans said. "Whether their evolutionary trajectory affected our long-distant ancestors is also great speculation, but it all happened a long time before humans or hominids evolved."

According to evolutionary research, multituberculates died out approximately over 30 million years ago during the early Oligocene period. Scientists speculate that they might have been outcompeted for food by other mammals like rodents and primates, the predecessors of contemporary humans.

The Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction event that eradicated the dinosaurs is also subject to scientific speculation. Most accepted theories include the impact of a large meteoroid, climate change through increased volcanic activity, and the spread of viruses. **DTI**

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Report paints devastating picture of dental care utilisation in Australia

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

CANBERRA, Australia: Findings from a telephone survey con-

ducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) on the use of dental services in 2008 seem to confirm the poor state of Australia's public dental health care system. According to the report released in March by the government agency in Canberra, only 25 % of patients eligible for govern-

ment-funded dental care currently seek treatment in public dental clinics.

The financial burden of treatment was found to be the major reason that people did not see a dentist. Of those who actually visited a public dentist, more than 50 % waited at least

a year for a dental appointment, which is in line with results from a recent survey by the Government of Western Australia's Department of Health, which found that 24,000 patients in communities around the city of Perth are currently waiting for treatment in public dental hospitals.

Most people on benefits also visited their dentists for a problem rather than a check-up and had more extractions done, the report states.

Low-income Australians who are receiving payments from Centrelink, a governmental welfare programme, are currently eligible for dental benefits through Health Care Cards. According to the latest government statistics, approximately 12 % of the Australian population is estimated to fall under this category.

Generally, only every second dentate Australian reported having visited a dentist within the past 12 months. Six per cent of all adults were found to be edentulous. **DTI**

Asians catch up in global research index

DTI

TOKYO, Japan: Research institutions in the Asia Pacific region have increased their output of scientific publications, new figures from the Nature Publishing Group (NPG) in Tokyo indicate. According to the annual Nature Publishing Index made public last week, researchers from the region were co-authors of one out of four papers published in NPG's Nature research journals worldwide in 2011.

Despite the recession and March earthquake and tsunami, researchers from Japan were the most productive (involved in 10 per cent of all papers), followed by contributors from China, Australia, the Republic of Korea and Singapore. An increasing output of papers by researchers in Taiwan and India was also observed, which were ranked sixth and seventh in the index, respectively, and these countries have the potential to rival Singapore next year, an NPG spokesperson said.

One in four papers published in Nature research journals had at least one co-author from the Asia Pacific region.

In addition, 14 institutions in the region have been included in the Nature Publishing Index's Global Top 100 research institutions, with the University of Tokyo ranking highest in the region at fifth place with an annual output of 109 articles.

The index, which is updated every week, currently covers 17 research journals published by NPG. Although the Nature journals have limited coverage of clinical medicine, several papers were published last year on new technologies and techniques that could have an impact on future dental materials or treatment procedures.

The majority of papers in 2011 still came from the USA, which has seven institutions in the top ten list of research institutions, including Harvard University in Boston and Stanford University. From Europe, only the French National Centre for Scientific Research and the Max Plank Institutes in Germany made it to the top ten. **DTI**

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Dear reader,



Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

Anyone who has been working in medicine for a long time has probably heard dentists referred to as “only failed medical students” or “overpaid sadistic tooth pullers”. While their medical colleagues may consider them second-class professionals, little is known about the fact that they have already left their mark in history, for good and for worse.

Did you know, for instance, that the inventor of the electric chair was Alfred P. Southwick, a dentist from Buffalo in the USA? Observing the death of a drunken man touching an electric generator in one of his hometown’s factories, Southwick became a driven advocate of capital punishment by electrocution until he died in 1898. While highly debated now and back then, his idea has the dubious honour of being one of the few inventions of the early electrical period to have survived the last century almost unmodified.

And what about art? When in 1930, American painter Grant Wood was looking for a man and woman to stand model for his most famous work “American Gothic”, he not only turned to his sister but also convinced his family dentist, Dr Byron McKeeby, to pose. Until this day, the characteristic figure wearing farmer’s clothes and holding a three-pronged hay-fork eternally looks down at visitors from a wall at the Art Institute in Chicago.

Dentists have even been involved in politics. Rumour has it that one of the reasons that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had to leave office in 1989 was that her Lord Chancellor and successor John Major was not able to rally support in the Conservative’s leadership election because he was recovering from a long-scheduled dental surgery.

The first US president George Washington, who suffered from severe dental problems throughout his life, died from a peritonsillar abscess that some historians think could have been caused by his dentures.

These few examples show that despite their bad reputation, dentists have always been influencing our lives to a high degree. I am wondering what their impact will be in the future apart from relieving people from pain and physical suffering through their professional skills. ■

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Zimmermann
Group Editor
Dental Tribune International

“Dentists just seem to be doing fine, don’t they?”



Acrylates are everywhere



Dr Denis Sasseville
Canada

Acrylates have been around since the 1930s, when Rohm and Haas began mass production of Plexiglas, a clear and resistant glass substitute made of polymerized methacrylate. It is used extensively for windowpanes, airplane canopies, car lights and windshields, streetlamps, and so on. Numerous other acrylates

gens. In the occupational setting, publications have described severe hand dermatitis with painful fissures and desquamation in orthopaedic surgeons and nurses exposed to MMA monomer in bone cement. Dental surgeons, assistants, and technicians are also at risk of allergic sensitization from monofunctional and polyfunctional (meth)acrylates and from the epoxy acrylate prepolymers. (Meth)acrylate monomers can penetrate most gloves within minutes, especially vinyl and latex gloves. The best protection is conferred by laminated polyethylene/

Most patients in case reports of allergic contact dermatitis to (meth)acrylates have multiple sensitizations when patch tested. These have been regarded as cross reactions. However, chemical analyses carried out by investigators at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health have shown that most acrylate-based industrial products contain numerous other acrylates as impurities, sometimes as much as 46 per cent of the total weight of the product. These additional compounds are not disclosed on material safety data sheets. Many of the so-called

“Dental surgeons, assistants, and technicians are also at risk of allergic sensitization.”

have been synthesized and have found applications in paints and adhesives, dental composite resins, printing inks, artificial nails, and medical devices such as contact lenses, hearing aids, and bone cement for orthopedic endoprotheses.

The salts of acrylic or methacrylic acid can be polymerized to form solid plastics which are inert and harmless. Nowadays, numerous (meth)acrylates, mostly used in dental bonding materials, printing inks, and artificial nails, are polymerized by exposure to UV light with help from a priming photoinitiator.

The monomeric building blocks acrylates and, to a lesser extent, methacrylates are strong irritants, but they are also notorious aller-

ethylene vinyl alcohol, but these gloves are inelastic and expensive. Double gloving with nitrile gloves, or polyethylene gloves under nitrile gloves, affords adequate protection for tasks that do not exceed 30 to 60 minutes.

(Meth)acrylates are tricky molecules to test with. The concentration that will reveal allergic sensitization is close to the irritancy threshold. Furthermore, these molecules can induce active sensitization. Some authors have suggested screening series of patch-test allergens. None of these series will pick up every case, but most will be detected if tested with common forms of acrylates. Extended series will be necessary in most occupational cases, as well as testing with the patients’ own products, appropriately diluted.

cross reactions could in fact be concomitant reactions.

Acrylates are everywhere, and their use is likely to increase. Despite the plethora of publications on (meth)acrylates over more than half a century, new information keeps surfacing about these fascinating chemicals, enough recently to justify their nomination by the North American Contact Dermatitis Group as “allergen of the year 2012.” ■

Contact Info

Dr Denis Sasseville is working as a dermatologist at the McGill University Health Centre in Montréal in Canada. He can be contacted at denis.sasseville@mcgill.ca

To the Editor

Re: “Hand-held dental X-ray devices under investigation by FDA” (Dental Tribune Asia Pacific, Vol. 10, No 3, pages 1–2)

Thank-you for providing additional information for your readers beyond what was announced by the FDA. However, your readers should know that the level of operator radiation exposure from hand-held X-ray devices varies significantly between manufacturers and equipment styles.

Also, your closing statement that radiation from hand-held devices poses no greater risk than “standard dental radiography like CT” is a bit misleading.

CT exposes the patient to much more radiation than intra-oral radiography. Any handheld device that has comparable exposure to CT should not be used, as lower exposure levels are easily achievable. ■

Clark Turner, 17.02.2012

Re: “Intraoral device manoeuvres electrical wheelchair” (Dental Tribune Asia Pacific, Vol. 10, No. 3, page 5)

Wow! I have a disabled daughter who is fully dependant (unfortunately she does not have good tongue control) but the implications are amazing! Fantastic work is being done by all involved. It would be good if it could be widely available to all income brackets and countries. ■

Sonya, 04.03.2012

Re: “Saudi dentists receive US patent for novel soft tissue augmentation technique” (Dental Tribune Asia Pacific, Vol. 10, No.3, page 5)

The tunnel technique has been published on by a number of sources using an acellular dermal matrix since the late 1990s. I am curious as to how someone can patent something that has been published in the past (prior art) and why the US patent office is issuing patents for techniques. ■

Gregori M. Kurtzman, 14.03.2012

Dental Tribune welcomes comments, suggestions and complaints at feedback@dental-tribune.com

Dentist purchases Elvis Presley's dental crown

DTI

Stockport, UK: A Canadian dentist has recently made the winning bid on a porcelain crown of Elvis Presley. The affectionately named "Kings Crown" sold for £5,200 (US\$8,150) and added to the dentist's collection of celebrity dental memorabilia, in which he already had a tooth

from John Lennon he bought last year from the same auction house.

Dr Michael Zuk, a general dentist from Red Deer, Alberta (Canada), purchased the crown together with a model of Elvis Presley's teeth made for the rock-and-roll star by his former dentist, Henry Weiss, in Memphis. The crown was accompanied by five documents confirming its

authenticity, including a letter from Presley's tour manager Joe Esposito.

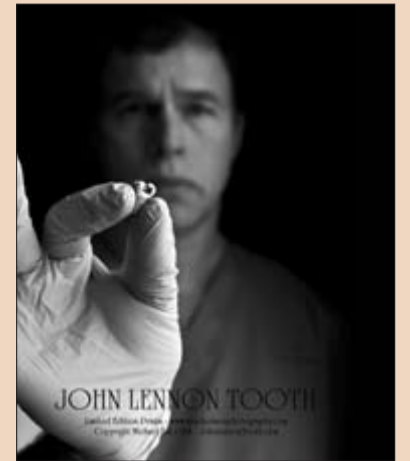
Prior to the auction, the crown was expected to be sold for an estimated value of £6,000 to £10,000.

"Whilst it is not a real tooth, as was the case with the Lennon tooth, it is the only one in existence and we expected there to

be considerable interest in this," said Paul Fairweather of Omega Auctions.

According to Zuk's blog, Presley used to have a gap between his teeth. He was so embarrassed by the space that he decided to have one of his front teeth crowned. [DTI](#)

Right: Dr Michael Zuk also bought a tooth from John Lennon. (DTI/Photo courtesy of Sandra Olson, Canada)



Bib holders highly infested

DTI

WITTEN, Germany: Sterilisation protocols for dental bib holders are inconsistent and can result in the presence of bacteria such as *pseudomonas* and micro-organisms, researchers from Germany have proved. In a study conducted at the Witten/Herdecke University, they found bacteria on almost two-thirds of reusable bib holders.

"The analyses of the bacterial load showed that 70 per cent of all reusable bib holders were contaminated with bacteria. The predominant colony types identified were *staphylococci* and *streptococci*. On several bib chains, we also found various bacterial rods, *pseudomonas*, fungi and other types of cocci," said Prof. Stefan Zimmer, lead investigator of the study and scientific director at the Witten/Herdecke University. "Although the bacteria found in this study were all non-pathogenic, in principle reusable bib holders can cross-contaminate dental patients."

The bacteria found on the bib holders do not usually cause disease in healthy people, but can be a threat to immunosuppressed patients, as well as young children and the elderly, who often have compromised immune systems. Bacteria from an unsterilised bib holder can enter the body when a patient touches the bib holder or her neck after a dental visit and then rubs an eye or touches the mouth.

Cross-contamination can also occur when a bib chain is splattered with saliva, plaque, blood and spray from the mouth, when it catches onto hair and accumulates the wearer's sweat, make-up or discharge from neck acne, and if the dental worker applies a dirty bib chain with her gloved hands before the examination or cleaning.

Several other studies have found similar results. Three US studies found unacceptable levels of microbial contamination on dental bib holders, including *pseudomonas*, *E. coli* and *S. aureus*, the most common cause of staph infection. [DTI](#)

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Study recognises the value of YouTube for dentists

DTI

GÖTTINGEN, Germany: Researchers investigating YouTube have suggested that the potential of the online video-sharing platform and similar social media sites as means of dental education is highly underdeveloped. In a

study, they found that it could hold important implications for dental professionals, as well as dental education staff.

Owing to an increasing integration of multimedia sources into professional and academic education, Dr Michael Knösel, an orthodontic

specialist, and his team from the University of Göttingen, assessed the value of videos on YouTube related to dentistry. Using different search parameters, they discovered that there is wide variety of material available on YouTube with high educational value.

Two assessors with an academic background evaluated 60 videos in the general category "All" and 60 videos in the "Education" category. The results were first sorted "by relevance" and later by "most viewed".

According to the researchers, the informational value of videos in the general category was perceived as generally poor, whereas the most viewed videos in the educational category had the highest educational value. Videos in this category were concerned with oral surgery and implantology (17), preventive dentistry (15), general dentistry (16), as well as aesthetic dentistry and orthodontics (9). Five videos were considered to be entertaining rather than educating.

Videos in the educational category were mostly uploaded by practitioners but also by academic institutions and dental companies. The majority of videos in the general category, which were aimed at entertainment generally, were mostly posted by patients and laypersons, but there was also a significant percentage of videos with a commercial purpose and posted by dental manufacturers.

The assessors said that videos in the educational category depicted an optimistic view on dentistry, whereas those in the general category tended to be rather negative. They found that between 68 and 95 per cent of the videos represented dentistry accurately, and videos in the general category were inaccurate in this regard.

The researchers recommended that more academic institutions acknowledge YouTube as an effective supplementary medium for education. Currently, there are only a few dental schools that run their own YouTube channels. The University of Michigan's School of Dentistry, for example, initiated its channel more than three years ago and recently surpassed seven million viewers.

"YouTube and similar social media websites offer new educational possibilities for dentistry, but are currently both underdeveloped and underestimated regarding their potential value. Dentists should also recognise the importance of such websites in relation to the formation of public opinion about their profession," the researchers stated. "We would therefore like to encourage educators to make greater use of this medium, to work to improve the quality of videos, and to demand that contents are updated on a regular basis." □

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P&G cuts costs, expands overseas

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

CINCINNATI, Ohio & BOCA RATON, Fla., USA: Owing to slowing revenue growth, consumables manufacturer Procter & Gamble has to cut US\$10 billion in costs by the end of the fiscal year 2016. The restructuring plans made public at the Consumer Analyst Group of New York conference in February involve shedding thousands of jobs in the nonmanufacturing workforce,

as well as lower spending in areas like marketing or materials.

Despite the plans, hiring new staff in emerging markets like China will continue, the company behind the Crest toothpaste brand said.

P&G intends to expand its global toothpaste business significantly in the future by targeting emerging markets, particularly

in Latin America. CEO Robert McDonald said that he expects Crest sales in markets like Brazil to grow to double digits this year.

The Cincinnati company recently introduced its new Crest Pro-Health Clinical oral health product line to selected markets, which it claims helps to reduce plaque significantly. New additions to the Crest 3D White collection of award-winning products,

Crest 3D White Glamorous White Toothpaste and Crest 3D White Intensive Professional Effects Whitestrips, were also launched during New York Fashion Week last month.

P&G has been manufacturing Crest-branded toothpaste since 1955. While it is available in many countries worldwide, most recently in Belgium and the Netherlands, it still lags behind other market players like Colgate and Unilever in terms of market penetration.

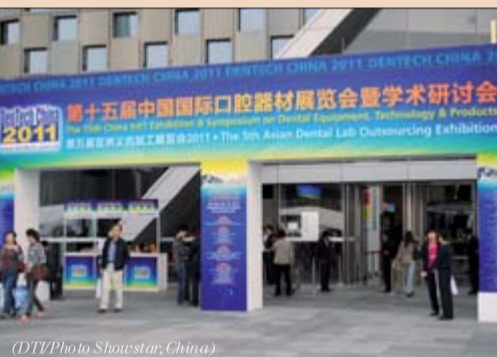
The company gained more than US\$11.5 billion from its healthcare businesses last year, which included oral health products and feminine wipes under the Always brand.

In total, P&G reported US\$82 billion in net sales last year, a 4.1 per cent increase from 2010. Gross margins in the same period decreased by almost 2 per cent, which the company said was due to lower customer spending and increasing costs for commodities. [D](#)

AD

UK media company buys China dental show

LONDON, UK/SHANGHAI, China: One of China's premier dental shows has been acquired by B2B communications provider UBM in London. Along with DenTech in Shanghai, the UK-based company also announced to have purchased equity stakes worth US\$30 million in three other premium trade shows in Asia and Europe focusing on furniture, renewable energies and airport development.



(DTI/Photo ShowStar, China)

UBM's Asia division in Hong Kong currently organises more than 150 events throughout the continent with focus on China and India. Once the acquisition of DenTech has been finalised next month, it will own 70 per cent of the newly formed joint venture company called Shanghai UBM ShowStar Exhibition. The remaining 30 per cent will be held by ShowStar, the company that owned DenTech previously.

Inaugurated in 1994, the show has become one of the largest exhibitions for dental materials and equipment in China. It rivals with Sino-Dental in Beijing and other exhibitions in Guangzhou, Xi'an and Nanjing in the booming Chinese dental market.

In 2011, ShowStar reported revenues of US\$5.6 million and the attendance of 14,000 visitors. Both parties said that the joint venture is intended to strengthen DenTech's position as an international trade show globally.

According to ShowStar figures, 10 per cent of the participants in last year's show came from abroad. [D](#)

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NCD strategy must address oral diseases

“The quest for prevention and control of NCDs would not be complete without addressing oral diseases,” FDI told the WHO Executive Board, meeting in Geneva from 16 to 20 January 2012.

In an intervention on 19 January, FDI called upon WHO to take four specific actions regarding oral health and NCDs: first, to ensure that oral diseases are incorporated into NCD programmes and included in national health planning, and second, to include oral diseases at the same level as the four main NCDs in the Global NCD Monitoring framework, its indicators and targets.

FDI’s third recommended action is to add a target related to reducing days at school or work missed due to oral diseases, which would also address wider determinants of health and general development. Finally, it called upon WHO to develop and agree a set of optional and more comprehensive oral health targets and indicators for which global oral health community can make precise proposals.

FDI strategy

FDI’s intervention at WHO follows its successful bid along with the sustained efforts of a number of other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, to have

oral diseases specifically referred to in the Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of NCDs agreed at the United Nations Summit in September 2011.

The Declaration’s Article 19 now recognizes that “renal, oral and eye diseases pose a major health burden for many countries and that these diseases share common risk factors and can benefit from common responses to non-communicable diseases.”

Monitoring

Since that time, FDI has intensified its contacts with WHO and attended key events such as the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health held in Rio de Janeiro from 19 to 21 October. Further, FDI attended an informal dialogue with NGOs last December as part of the preparatory process for the January consultation. There, FDI emphasised the need for oral health indicators, with the need to identify targets for children.

Later, on 21 December 2011, Dr da Silva and Executive Director Dr Jean-Luc Eiselé, met with to key WHO executives to discuss the sustainability of the WHO oral health programme in the light of a 20% cutback in WHO, which, Dr da Silva conceded might indeed have an impact on the oral health



End February 2012	Deadline for the web-based Member State consultation on the WHO Discussion Paper ‘A Comprehensive Global Monitoring Framework and Voluntary Targets for the Prevention and Control of NCDs’.
March 2012	WHO will revise proposals for the monitoring framework and example targets
Between late March & early May 2012	A second consultation will be held with Member States
In advance of World Health Assembly (21 to 26 May 2012)	WHO to hold consultations with all interested stakeholders.
At World Health Assembly	WHO to present a substantive progress report, including initial indicators and targets.
February through June 2012	Regional consultations
Before end 2012	WHO to hold another Member State consultation and complete the work on the global monitoring framework, including a set of indicators and targets.
2013: January (WHO Executive Board) & May 66 th World Health Assembly	WHO to report on recommendations relating to articles 61 and 62 of the Political Declaration on NCDs

Table: Timeline

budget. He emphasized, nonetheless, that “It’s up to FDI, not WHO, to develop and formulate the oral health message! It’s FDI’s role to influence the WHO’s agenda on the topics that we feel are crucial.”

Its presence and statement at the January WHO Executive Board

very much reflects FDI’s intention of doing so.

Post-UN Summit

In its resolution (Resolution EB150.R7) issued following the Executive Board Meeting, WHO urged Members States to implement the UN Political Declaration

and draw upon the policies, strategies, programmes and interventions, and tools recommended by WHO.

Further, WHO urged members States to strengthen their commitment to implementing non-communicable disease programmes and participate fully in the WHO-led process of developing a comprehensive global monitoring framework, including a set of indicators.

Key requests

The resolution, co-sponsored by Australia, Barbados, Canada, Costa Rica, Kenya, Norway, Russia, Switzerland and the US, was intended to ensure WHO has a clear timeline for the actions required of it by the Political Declaration. Its calls for action include a request to WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan to submit a substantive progress report on the development of a framework, including a set of indicators and targets, to the sixty-fifth World Health Assembly in May 2012) and complete the work on the global monitoring framework, including a set of targets and indicators, based on a Member State consultation held before the end of 2012.

The current Global Action Plan on NCDs expires next year. The next will run from 2013 to 2020 and it is imperative for WHO to have a draft ready for consideration by the WHO Executive Board at its January 2013 meeting. ^[2]

“Other medical professions should focus on good oral health too”

Prof Prathip Phantumvanit, member of the World Dental Development and Health Promotion Committee, talks about dentistry in Thailand and gives his views on the dental profession, public health and NCD prevention.

Are people in Thailand conscious of oral health?

Prof Phantumvanit: Overall, oral health among adults is quite good, even when compared with some western countries. However, it is not so good among young children and you can see quite a lot of caries. Periodontal disease is a serious problem, but proportionately not very high among the population in general.

People do focus on the aesthetic aspect—for example, you see a lot of people wearing dental braces—and are more

and more concerned about having good teeth and good oral hygiene.

Can you comment on Thailand’s current success as an exporter of dental services?

We are very interested in exporting medical services: costs of dental services are not high in Thailand and the work is of very high quality. A lot of people travel to Thailand for health care, some for general health, others for oral health.

How far is the dental profession integrated with Thailand’s public health sector?

Dentists in Thailand work in both the public and private sectors, with about 30 to 40 per cent—



Prof Prathip Phantumvanit.

in some countries, that figure is as low as 10 to 20 per cent—working in public health, either as health officials or in public hospitals and clinics. They are quite used to developing and delivering public information messages.

The remainder—about 50–60 per cent—are in private practice or in a private hospital or clinic and have less of an interest in public health in general and in communicating with the general public

What should be the role of dentists in public health and NCD prevention?

In my view, it’s very good for dentists to be an integral part of public health and patient re-

ferral. But what about the other way around? A recent study in Scotland, described in the *British Dental Journal*, carried out among 10,000 people found a link between tooth brushing and incidence of heart disease—not a strong link, but evidence at least.

What can the other health professions do?

There needs to be a strong message from other medical professionals that oral hygiene is good for the rest of the body. Of course dentists should look and see whether people smoke, offer advice and so on. But the other professions should look too, for example, when cardiologists have a consultation, maybe they could say “open your mouth... you have a problem with your oral hygiene, maybe you should visit your dentist.” ...and the nurse as well.

It’s a two-way process. There is increasing evidence of the impact of oral health on general health. Not just for serious things like infection, but also messages on brushing your teeth...It’s very simple, but simple things can cause serious problems to the health.

Are there any encouraging signs?

I have discussed the NCD issue with other medical professions in Thailand and some of them are already looking in the mouth. Dental professional can help with people’s general health but I would very much like to see other medical professions focus on good oral health as well. ^[2]

Editorial note: The opinions expressed in this interview are Prof. Phantumvanit’s own: they do not necessarily reflect the views of FDI or its World Dental Development and Health Promotion Committee.