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An exclusive interview with Prof. Dr Shahjahan Katpar

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Low SARS-CoV-2 infection rate among dental hygienists

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Global celebration of healthy mouth

By Dr Sumaiya Hasan

2020 certainly taught us that health is prosperity and the greatest blessing. Health demands persistent efforts for maintenance and is not a one day job. However certain significant dates throughout the year are designated for various dimensions of a healthy mouth. One such example is the World Oral Health Day (WOHD) which is observed every year on 20 March.

Healthy mouth and WOHD: Reflecting back over the years

WOHD, first declared in 2007 and fully activated in 2013, unites the world to dedicate efforts to reduce the burden of oral diseases, and therefore shape the future of societies. Each year, a precise theme on this day, convey a strong oral health-related message. For the past few years, the FDI World Dental Federation, through powerful themes, has been motivating people to attend their dental hygiene. Few such themes include *'Healthy Mouth, Healthy Body.' 'Think Mouth, Think Health", 'Act on Mouth Health'* etc. Last year when the public observed this day and the world united against the surge of COVID-19, FDI urged the public to unite for oral hygiene. FDI announced the theme will be *'Say Ahh: Unite for Mouth Health.'*

2021: Be proud of your mouth

This year's theme *'Be proud of Your Mouth'* is yet another card to swiftly transform the attitude of the general public towards oral health. The message targets multiple oral health-related goals in the following ways.

- In order to be proud of your mouth, you have to strive for its improvement. Therefore, the thoughtful slogan of WOHD 2021 is indirectly motivating people to nurture their dental health. This will not only allow them to maintain their oral hygiene but also get their dental problems treated.
- *"Be Proud of Your Mouth"* inclines individuals towards the idea of owning their dental health. Owning their oral health will not just motivate them to work for its betterment but also consider it as an integral part of their systemic health, something which the dental associations have been unanimously working for many years.

Need of time

Regardless of date and time, dental professionals around the globe have been working remarkably well for the oral healthcare of the public. Nevertheless, WOHD can be considered as a golden opportunity to disseminate the message of oral hygiene and to work in spheres where there is room for improvement. Few examples of such spheres include,

- Focussing on preventive aspect and not just treatment.
- Focussing more on specific age groups such as children and aged people. Without a shadow of a doubt, every individual is equal in terms of dental treatment. But, certain characteristics of the aforementioned groups make them an important target population. This is due to the following reasons.
- Children are at a stage where they are developing habits including dental hygiene-related protocols. If the emphasis is on correcting and making them habitual of following correct dental hygiene protocols, changes can be seen. They may follow it for the rest of their lives and save themselves from the hassle of dental treatment.
- The elders are at a stage of life when ageing and other medical problems interplay to catastrophically impact the health. This impact may also be observed on dental health. The absence of effective dental treatment may allow nutritional deficiencies and further add up to their problems.

Working on strategies that may be helpful in providing basic oral hygiene necessities to certain populations.

PM Imran, first lady tests positive for COVID-19

Photo: DT Pakistan

DT Pakistan Report

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Imran Khan and first lady Bushra Bibi have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, it emerged on 20th March 2021.

The premier's diagnosis was confirmed by his aide on health Dr Faisal Sultan. He said that PM Imran was self-isolating at home after testing positive.

Later in the evening, PTI Senator Faisal Javed announced that Bushra Bibi had also tested positive. The news comes two days after the premier received his first shot of the COVID-19 vaccine. His diagnosis was also later confirmed by the Prime Minister's Office.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of National Health Services clarified that the premier was not "fully vaccinated" when he contracted the virus.

"He only got the first dose merely two days ago which is too soon for ANY vaccine to become effective. Antibodies develop 2-3 weeks after the second dose of 2-dose COVID vaccines," it said.

Later in the day, Dr Sultan addressed a media briefing to clear up misconceptions about the prime minister's diagnosis two days after being vaccinated.

He said PM Imran had been advised to isolate at home and rest. "We are monitoring his health and clinical parameters." He said that currently the prime minister was not in need of treatment or medical intervention.

He went on to say that it was important to understand how vaccines worked. "No vaccine works immediately after being administered. Antibodies can take at least two to three weeks to develop." He said that for two-dose vaccines, such as the one from Sinopharm, antibodies could take two to three weeks to develop after the second dose.

"Therefore, it is obvious that the premier's immunity had not developed when he was vaccinated. It is possible that he was exposed [to the virus] before and it was already present in his body," the PM's aide said, adding that it was important to clarify these questions.

Dr Sultan said that all those PM Imran had been in contact with would be tested and urged them to isolate themselves for the time being. He concluded by urging citizens to follow precautionary measures to stem the spread of the disease. "We are seeing a huge number of cases and the country's positivity rate is 9.5pc.

"The positivity rate has doubled in the past week. In some cities, it has crossed 10pc. So follow precautionary measures, stay at home when possible, use face masks, maintain a distance of six feet from each other, refrain from visiting crowded places and regularly wash/sanitise your hands," he said. PM Imran, 68, has been holding regular and frequent meetings lately, including attending a security conference held in Islamabad that was attended by a large number of people.

He addressed the conference without wearing a mask, and attended another gathering to inaugurate a housing project for poor people in a similar fashion on Thursday. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis Zulfiqar Bukhari was also present on the occasion.

Yesterday, the premier had visited Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where he toured Malakand University, inaugurated a new academic block and addressed a gathering of students. He had also visited the Swat Motorway, where he inaugurated the Swat Expressway Tunnels.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister Shahbaz Gill added that PM Imran's symptoms were not severe and he had a "mild cough and fever".

DRAP approves country's first anti-corona drug's phase II/III clinical trial

DT Pakistan Report

ISLAMABAD - The country's first indigenously developed anti-COVID-19 drug C-IVIG has got approval for Phase II/III clinical trial from the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP). According to an official of DRAP, the authority gave approval for anti-COVID-19 drug C-IVIG developed at Dow University of Health Sciences to enter phase II/III clinical trial.

He said that the multi-centre trial will recruit 310 severe COVID-19 patients to further evaluate the safety and efficacy of the drug.

He added the Phase I/II clinical trial report was submitted to the clinical study committee by Principal Investigator, Dr Shaukat Ali which showed 100% recovery in severe COVID-19 patients and 56.5% recovery in critical COVID-19 patients.

Photo: DT Pakistan

The committee appreciated the development of indigenous treatment and also noted that it was the first biological drug of Pakistan that had completed clinical trials registered both nationally and internationally. The official said that the Clinical Study Committee was chaired by Dr Abdur Rasheed, Director, Division of

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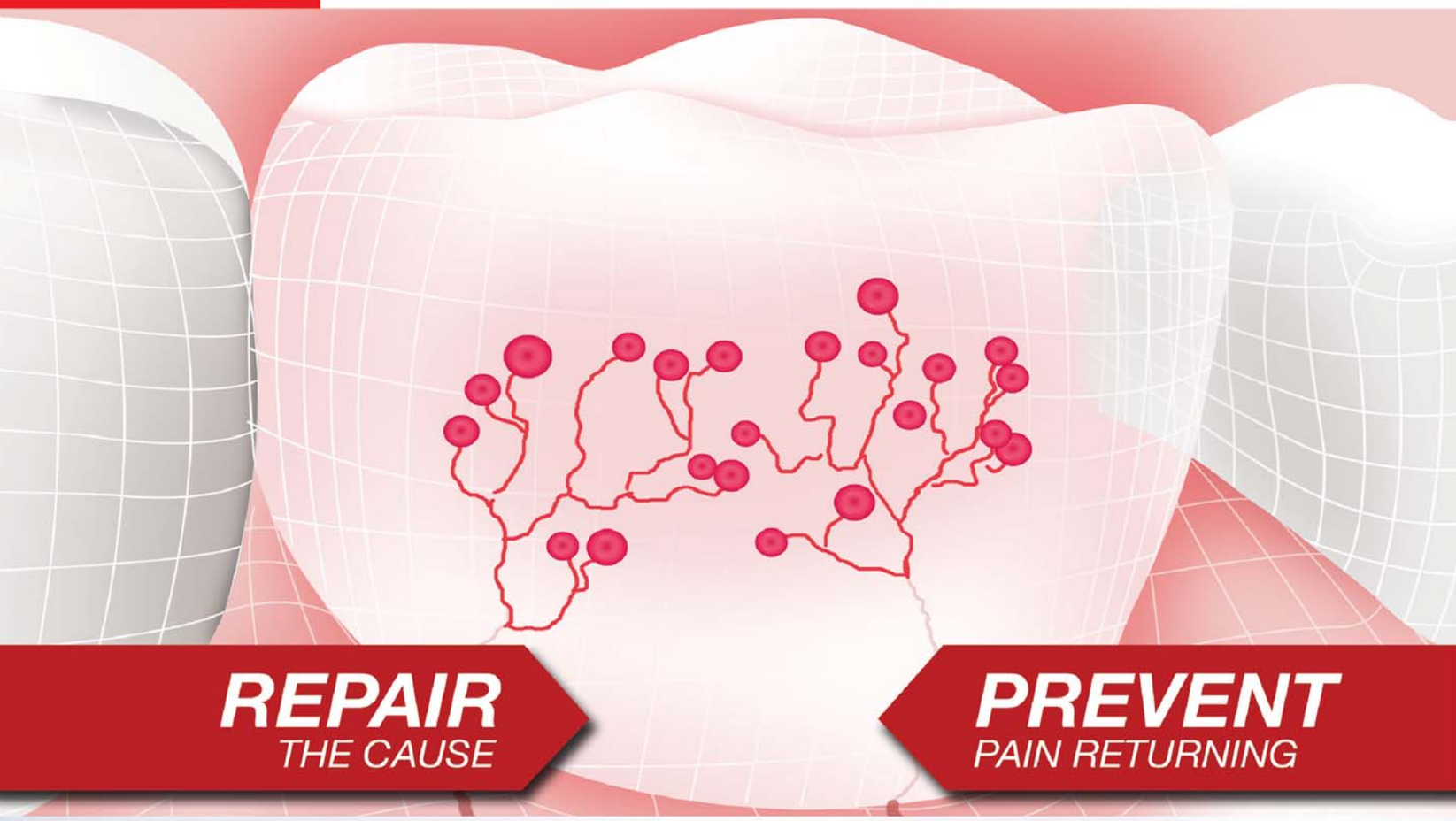

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† With continued use. Also fights cavities.
¥ vs. toothpastes with 5% potassium nitrate. For instant relief, apply directly to the sensitive tooth and gently massage for 1 minute.

Reference: 1. Li Y et al. J Clin Dent. 2011; 22(Spec Iss):1-10. 2. Nathoo S et al. J Clin Dent. 2009; 2(Spec Iss):23-30. 3. Ayad F et al. J Clin Dent. 2009; 2(Spec Iss): 31-36. 4. Ayad F et al. J Clin Dent. 2009;2(Spec Iss):115-122. 5. Nathoo S et al. J Clin Dent 2009;2(Spec Iss):123-130. 6. Lavender et al., Am J Dent., 2010; 23 Sp Is A:14A-19A.

Dental community requires their separate 'PDC' – Prof. Shahjahan Katpar

By Dr Muattar Hanif

Professor Shahjahan Katpar is Dean and Chairman Board Faculty of Dentistry at Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS). After completing BDS from Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences, Jamshoro, Pakistan in 1991, Prof. Katpar passed both Fellowship and Membership Examinations (FCPS/ MCPS) in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) from the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) in the year 2000 and 2001 respectively.

He formally started his career as Assistant Prof. OMFS and Head of Oral Biology Department in 2002 at Hamdard University. In 2010, Prof. Katpar worked as Vice Principal Dentistry, Associate Professor and Head of OMFS department at Bahria University Medical & Dental College (BUMDC) Karachi. Later, he served as Associate Dean, Post-Graduate Programs Dentistry and Masters of Dental Surgery (MDS) Program Director at Dow University of Health Sciences from 2007-2009. Prof Katpar then moved back to his alumni varsity and joined as Professor Maxillofacial Surgery and in-charge of Dental Skill Lab in 2014.

Prof. Katpar is currently serving as Head of OMFS Speciality, Dow Dental College (DDC) at Dr Ruth KM Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi and Shaheed Mohatarma Benazir Bhutto Institute of Trauma, DUHS from Nov 2017 till date.

Among many feathers in his cap, Prof. Katpar has developed a new OMFS surgical procedure, to treat fractured mandible infant cases. The published document is available on Google as 'Prof. Katpar's Innovative Splint Technique.'

Dental Tribune Pakistan recently spoke to him about his contributions to the dental profession and representing Pakistan on the international level.

Dental Tribune Pakistan: This pandemic has affected dentistry a lot especially the education system. How was your response to such an unprecedented situation?

Prof. Shahjahan Katpar: Yes, the COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the world. Everyone, including us, and the education system has also been affected negatively. Post-graduate and under-graduate training has been suffered due to lockdown. DUHS has three dental colleges, so the task to maintain and regulate education was our priority and it was also our biggest challenge as well. We tried our best by providing online teaching, assignments, and lectures to continue the process of education and not compromise it in any form. DUHS took special measures to ensure that the gap developed by online teaching methods can be overcome by uploaded some lectures ahead of time. It was impossible to escape from the impact of pandemic, but we tried our best and continue to do so.

"The biggest dilemma is where does letter of 'D' for dentistry exist in the PMC?"

You have an amazing career as dental academician to sustain your passion for spreading knowledge. How has been your journey so far?

It has been unique, beautiful, challenging, thrilling, and crazy. You see, life is all about ups and downs. I may appear calm and composed on surface, but you don't know what went behind my back. This is life! Every day is a new challenge. I graduated in 1991 from Liaquat Medical College, Jamshoro. A house job followed that, and I came back to Karachi. Here I did my first membership and then fellowships from the CPSP. I was very fortunate by the grace of Allah. I am one of the pioneers in the fellowship of the CPSP in dentistry. I happen to be the first dental graduate from my parent institute to do a fellowship in any dentistry speciality.

So, hard work pays off, and Allah made things very easy for me. I started my teaching career at Hamdard University as an Assistant Professor in 2002 and moved to DUHS in 2006. I joined Bahria University in 2010 or 2009 and then LUMHS in 2017. I am now back at DUHS and Insha'Allah plan to retire from here whenever the time is right in this whole process. I did my training in Pakistan's first FCPS training centre in any dental speciality which was established by Prof. Dr Mervyn Moin Hosein, my mentor and supervisor. I am trying to follow in his footsteps at the same time.

There's a difference in the degree's completion time in various places. It takes four years in Pakistan while it is five years in the USA. In 2012, we started a five-year program, but that didn't seem to go well. What is your opinion on this?

You are talking about my mission, vision, passion and the main goal for this country, Alhamdulilah. The five-year program that began at DUHS in 2012 had to be discontinued within three months when they realized that certain things were not on point and hence the process was halted. Unfortunately, my senior colleagues who succeeded, didn't catch up with the process and hence it was delayed and eventually it was stopped. God was kind to me when I was at LUMHS, Jamshoro things started to look better again, all thanks to Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Naushad Sheikh. He allowed us to conduct Pakistan's first and pioneer in dental education conference. We were able to identify the setbacks in dental education of Pakistan and concluded that the solution lies in turning it into a five-year graduate program. We conducted seminars and invited all the honourable speakers from Pakistan. They suggested that we need to have seven new dental specialities taught as separate teaching and examination subjects. This was something which does not exist in Pakistan. All of these specialities are trained internationally, and they have a different exam. I think this was where the future lies. We need to follow the international guidelines and introduce behavioural sciences, forensic odontology and research methodology, which are equally important subjects. However, let me tell you that University of Health Sciences (UHS), Lahore did an excellent job. They have started teaching behavioural sciences in dentistry and got one step ahead. I still think that to attain international standards; dentistry has to move forward. We need new dental specialities and faculty as well to improve the profession. This will allow fresh dental graduates to be more qualified and trained than us. That is my aim.

What do you think is the crucial difference between education here and abroad?

They are more focused in terms of research and clinical skills and have structured training programs. Their teaching is directed as they are not very commercial oriented. They will produce dental graduates based on society's need, whereas we are in a commercial rat race. Growth in dental colleges is exponential, and the focus lies in quantity rather than quality. Another significant difference is that they have standardised criteria all set, which we lack. I also feel that only those passionate about dentistry are enrolled abroad.

"Growth in number of dental colleges is exponential, and their focus lies in quantity rather than quality"

Everyone in the medical society took part in helping the masses during the current situation of pandemic, but dental community was side-lined. What is your view on this?

Unfortunately, political corruption has a major role. Some of the stakeholders didn't allow us to come forward and contribute. This is where the

Continued on Page 11

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†Forms a protective layer over the sensitive area of the teeth. Brush twice a day for lasting sensitivity protection.*vs. Previously marketed formulation. **With twice-daily brushing.

References: 1. Greenspan DC et al. J Clin Dent 2010; 21: 61-65. **2.** La Torre G and Greenspan DC. J Clin Dent 2010; 21(3): 72-76. **3.** Earl JS et al. J Clin Dent 2011: 22(3); 62-67. **4.** Parkinson CR et al. J Clin Dent 2011; 22(3): 74-81. **5.** GSK Data on File, ML498. **6.** GSK Data on File, ML584. **7.** GSK Data on File, ML589. **8.** GSK Data on File, RH01422. **9.** GSK Data on File, RH01897. **10.** GSKCH PK IPSOS Study 2019, n = 250 qualified dentists. Date of preparation: February 2021 PM-PK-SENO-21-00003

BUM&DC welcomes a new batch with white coat ceremony

KARACHI - Bahria University Medical and Dental College (BUM&DC) recently welcomed the 9th batch of BDS with a white coat ceremony.

Photo: DT Pakistan

Vice Admiral (R) Khalid Ameen HI (M), Director General, BUM&DC, was invited as the chief guest.

Dr Wahab Bukhsh Kadri, Principal, Dental Section, BUM&DC, gave the welcome address and acknowledged the efforts of students on induction in this prestigious institute.

The Director-General congratulated the students on their admission in the field of dentistry. Dr Kulsoom Fatima, Vice Principal, Dental Section, BUM&DC, addressed the audience about the academic years of the study program of BDS, development programs and seminars conducted in the university.

Prof. Dr Ambreen Usmani, Dean and Principal, Medical Section, (BUM&DC), guided the students for devotion to their profession, hard work and disciplinary rules in university. Principal, Vice Principal medical and nursing institute and all faculty members attended the ceremony. The Head of various departments distributed the white coats, while the Principal, Dental Section took oath from the students. The program ended with group photographs followed by a sign in ceremony for the students.***-PR***

BUMDC highlights the fundamentals about research

KARACHI - Bahria Medical & Dental College (BUM&DC) recently conducted a seminar on dental research seminar.

The seminar titled 'Fundamentals of Research' was organised by Dental Research Cell (DRC). This seminar was headed by Dr Muhammad Khawaja Hammad Uddin, Assistant Professor, Department of Science of Dental Materials, BUMDC and Organiser at DRC. He has been recently awarded and recognised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for the postgraduate degree program.

Prof. Dr Wahab B Kadri, Principal Dental Section and Head of Department of Oral Surgery, BUM&DC, was invited to be a chief guest.

Dr M K Hammad Uddin, Dr Kiran Fatima and Dr Akbar Abbas Zaidi spoke on occasion.

The event concluded with distribution of certificates of appreciation was distributed among organisers and speakers. ***-PR***

Photos: DT Pakistan

AMDC presents endodontic cases

KARACHI - Under the supervision of Dr Nabeel Naeem Baig, Director Ameen Medical and Dental Centre (AMDC) and Chairman ERC-CIRS recently organised one-day workshop on Endodontics-Case Presentation.

The course coordinator was Dr Bisma Anwar, Administrative Officer AMDC and Educational Research Centre-Centre of International Research Sciences (ERC-CIRS).

Photos: DT Pakistan

The lecture was delivered by Dr Amber Ahtesham, Dental Surgeon, AMDC.

She discussed the endodontic case diagnosis, tooth anatomy and morphology, methods of working length determination, obturation techniques, procedural errors its prevention & postoperative complications. She also shared her experience and clinical cases with the participants. ***-PR***

HBS celebrates 'orientation and white coat ceremony'

ISLAMABAD - The Dental Section of HBS Medical and Dental College recently organised 'Orientation Day- White Coat Ceremony' for the newly inducted BDS batch. The event was lead by Dr Qurat-Ul-Ain, Head of the Department of Community Dentistry.

Photo: DT Pakistan

The event aimed to allow students to learn how things work at their new institute and meet other students, faculty, and staff members. A good orientation program helps students feel enthusiastic about starting college and smooths the transition to campus life and the independence that comes with it.

The event started with students taking the Hippocratic Oath and celebrate the White Coat Ceremony. During the ceremony, a white coat was placed on each student's shoulders. The Hippocratic Oath was recited by Prof. Zahir Abbasi, Principal, Medical Section,

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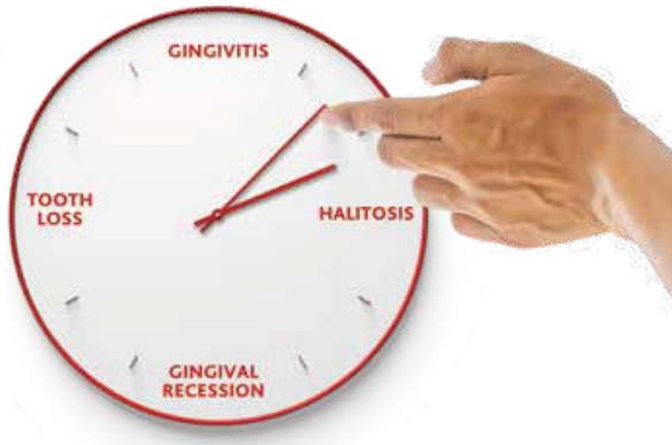
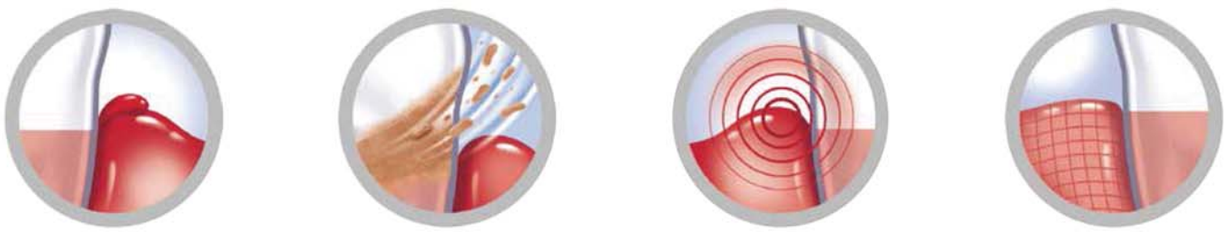
IT'S TIME TO RECOMMEND PARODONTAX TO YOUR PATIENTS



4 BENEFITS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY GUMS AND TEETH[1-7]



Treats and prevents gingivitis[1-6]

Removes plaque[1,3,7]

Reduces inflammation[1-5]

Keeps gingival margin tight[3]

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4x MORE EFFECTIVE VS REGULAR TOOTHPASTE AT REMOVING THE MAIN CAUSE* OF BLEEDING GUMS

References:
1. Akwagyriam et al, 2015. **2.** Kakar et al, 2014 **3.** GSK data on file (GCCSS-GH-001 - parodontax complete protection toothpaste). **4.** Akwagyriam et al, 2013. **5.** Jose et al, 2018. **6.** Attin T and Hornecker E, 2005. **7.** Williams et al, 1992.

*removal of plaque, after a professional clean and twice daily brushing

PM-PK-PAD-21-00004 Date of preparation: March 2021

FJDC holds orientation day of batch 29

KARACHI - Fatima Jinnah Dental College (FJDC) recently hosted an Orientation Day of Batch 29 with strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The event was held at the Preclinical Campus. Every year the orientation day is held to help students get acquainted with the environment and explore the campus.

FJDC is the pioneer of dental colleges in Karachi. It has treated over one million patients and produced top-notch dental graduates who are excelling in different fields worldwide. It is a translated vision of Her Excellency, Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, to establish a dental college par excellence that produces dental graduates who are the best in the country.

The event started with Quranic recitation followed by the National Anthem. An onscreen presentation was held by Dr Hussain Askary, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), FJDC, who introduced the esteemed faculty and enlightened the audience about the arduous task of opening the first private dental college in Karachi. He also summarized FJDC's successful journey of 29 years of existence, including the uphill regulatory task and getting the learned faculty on board. He shared the vision and expressed it to make it evident for the eventual stakeholders, students, and guardians.

The white coat ceremony has been part and parcel of FJDC's culture. Unfortunately, this ceremony was not convened due to COVID restrictions. Therefore, to give the students a visual feel, video footage of the White Coat Ceremony 2020 was also shown. It was inspiring to the students and comforting for the parents.

Prof. Dr Tasleem Hosein, Principal, FJDC) talked about the college's promising future for the new batch. She spoke about priming students for discipline, integrity, empathy and compassion. Dr Babur Ashraf, Vice Principal, Clinical Campus, FJDC, said that the ideology of FJDC is to make the students responsible, ethical, professional, life-long learners who can practice independently. Dr Sabiha Mirza, Vice Principal, Preclinical Campus, FJDC, mentioned that she would be monitoring the students' progress daily since assessment tests are taken place weekly. She also pointed out that the students can come to her anytime to seek counselling and that parents will be kept in the loop.

Moreover, it was highlighted that to cope with the upcoming challenges, especially in the context of compulsive lockdowns, the college is adopting innovative solutions, including blending learning. New flavours of time tested and evidence-based teaching methodologies are also to be introduced to this new induction. Staying connected on WhatsApp was emphasized. The new students will be trained accordingly.

After the event was over, students and their parents took a tour of the campus. ***-PR***

HITEC-IMS holds a one-day workshop on designing MCQs

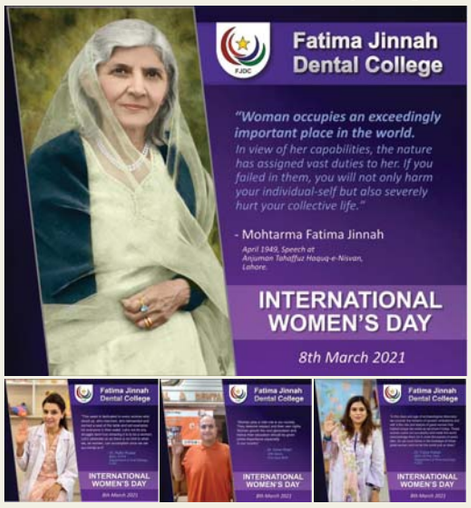
RAWALPINDI - The Department of Medical Education, HITEC-IMS Dental College, HITEC-IMS recently held a workshop. The event aimed to highlight the most critical method of assessment through Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs).

Dr Ambreen Gul, Head of Department (HOD) of Biochemistry, facilitated the comprehensive workshop. The workshop was attended by the HODs and senior faculty members of all dental departments.

The event put a spotlight on various types and difficulty indexes of MCQs. The assessment of students can be fair and impartial and honing faculty skills in making good quality MCQs. ***-PR***

FJDC celebrates womanhood on 'International Women's Week'

KARACHI - Fatima Jinnah Dental College (FJDC) recently celebrated International Women's Week to acknowledge women's achievement, work toward eliminating challenges faced by women today, and provide a platform for women to raise their voice. It is necessary to have women's rights because they are half the population on earth. If we ignore them and not address their issues, the world would be in great peril.



Dr Hussain Askary, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), FJDC, said, "There is a lot to be desired starting with gender equality, access to education, health, equal job opportunities and even elimination of domestic violence However I am glad that those days are behind us when women needed platforms and organizations to make statements like women are equal to men. Today we have reached general understanding that men and women both have their strengths and weaknesses and that women can also excel in any field. I see no reason why men and women both should not work shoulder to shoulder and progress towards a successful Nation. In education and healthcare, women have a very important role. They have many qualities that makes them most suitable. The biggest challenge in organizations is to provide women an environment which is safe, congenial and friendly for women, where they can have a good work-life balance. FJDC is an institution which is known for the healthy environment for girls and women especially the women leaders that have come up."

Dr Sabiha Mirza, Vice President, Pre-Clinical Campus, FJDC, stated, "Women started out by saying they want equality but now I think we are looking at the world where there is no gender gap. Each person is judged as an individual, be it a man or a woman and you are judged on your qualities, your productivity, your thoughts and how much you can contribute to whatever work you are doing in your home or any other environment. I think FJDC is doing extremely well. I can safely say 80% of the students are females and also the faculty staff is around 70% dominated by women. This is really telling you that we are on the right track".***-PR***

A recent FDI World Dental Federation global survey revealed that two-thirds of the responding countries are not allowing dentists to administer SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. However, dentists will be among the first to receive the vaccine in half of the responding countries. (Image: Leremy/Shutterstock)

FDI survey: Only a few countries enable dentists to administer SARS-CoV-2 vaccines

By Iveta Ramonaite
Dental Tribune International

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND - Like other oral health professionals, dentists are front-line workers who provide an essential healthcare service. Accordingly, many countries have included dentists in priority vaccination groups. But what about allowing dentists to administer SARS-CoV-2 vaccines? A recent survey conducted by FDI World Dental Federation revealed that only one-third of the responding countries permitted vaccine administration by dentists. In light of the results, FDI has urged more countries to enable dentists to administer the vaccines. Vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 are considered crucial by many as they could potentially help relax certain control measures that are in place to help slow down the spread of the virus. The US Food and Drug Administration has already granted emergency use authorisation to three vaccines: those developed by BioNTech and Pfizer, Moderna and, just recently, Janssen. In Europe, besides the BioNTech and Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, a vaccine from AstraZeneca has been recently been accepted as safe and effective by the European Commission. According to the World Health Organization, there are currently 262 vaccines either in preclinical or clinical development, and FDI recently stated that, by late January 2021, approximately 100 million SARS-CoV-2 vaccine doses had been administered in over 50 countries.

Vulnerable populations, including the elderly and at-risk groups such as healthcare workers, are among the first to receive the vaccine. Dentists have regular interactions with patients about their oral and overall health and have received extensive training in the medical field, which is why FDI believes that they are well positioned to support the national COVID-19 vaccination programmes. However, the survey showed that many member countries do not share this opinion.

Survey results

The survey included 57 member national dental associations from all over the world and was facilitated by FDI's COVID-19 Task Team. It revealed that nearly two-thirds of the responding countries had not granted dentists permission to administer SARS-CoV-2 vaccines as part of national vaccine roll-out strategies. European countries that do not permit dentists to administer the vaccine include Switzerland, Portugal, Austria, Denmark, Slovakia and Russia.

According to FDI, l'Ordre National des Chirurgiens-Dentistes (National College of Dental Surgeons) in France has urged the French government to permit dentists to distribute the vaccines, but without success. Discussions are also taking place in Spain, Sweden, Ireland, Australia, Kenya, Hong Kong and Germany, FDI noted.

"Oral health is a fundamental component of overall health and well-being and oral healthcare is an essential public service," Dr Gerhard Konrad Seeberger, president of FDI World Dental Federation, said in a press release. "Efforts should be made to enable dentists to administer COVID-19 vaccines when possible within national legislation and regulations, and with minimal disruption to oral healthcare services," he continued.

According to the survey results, the countries that have granted vaccine administration authorisation to the profession include Cambodia, Colombia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Nigeria, Serbia, Slovenia and the UK. In the US, approximately 20 states currently permit dentists to administer SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. FDI noted that some of the aforementioned countries have not previously allowed dentists to administer vaccines, or at least not the influenza vaccine.

Besides vaccine administration by dentists, the survey also examined the prioritisation of dentists in SARS-CoV-2 vaccine roll-out programmes. According to the findings, 53% of the responding countries said that dentists would be included in priority vaccination groups, 12% said that they would not, and 18% responded that the vaccination programme and priority groups were still pending. Countries that did not include dentists in the first phase of SARS-CoV-2 vaccine roll-out include Cambodia, Colombia, Kazakhstan, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Thailand.