

# World Dental Daily **fdi** Istanbul 2024 World Dental Congress

YOUR **fdi** WORLD DENTAL CONGRESS NEWSPAPER · Istanbul · 12–15 September 2024

## Welcome to the FDI World Dental Congress in Istanbul!

| FDIWDC24 offers key opportunities to advance dentistry and foster collaboration.



| Impressions from past World Dental Congresses. (All images: © FDI World Dental Federation)

In partnership with the Turkish Dental Association, FDI World Dental Federation has brought its flagship event, the World Dental Congress, back to the vibrant city of Istanbul in Türkiye, which last hosted the event in 2013. This prestigious congress serves as a vital platform for the global dental community to share ideas, knowledge and experiences through a comprehensive scientific programme, an expansive exhibition and unparalleled networking opportunities. This year's congress (FDIWDC24) boasts an innovative scientific programme, forums addressing the latest developments in dentistry and an exhibition showcasing key competitors in the dental field, providing significant benefits to attendees.

Organised 110 times, the FDI World Dental Congress has solidified its reputation as a leading event in dentistry, continuously driving the advancement of dental science and practice through pioneering scientific discussions, interactive forums and a broad industry exhibition. As the global voice of the dental

profession, the congress is dedicated to strengthening connections and promoting collaboration within the oral health community, offering an exclusive platform for building partnerships within the dental industry.

### Educational opportunities

FDIWDC24 is contributing meaningfully to continuing education for dentists worldwide, offering 144 ADA CERP credits. The educational programme this year boasts substantial advancements owing to a more diverse range of speakers, a record number of abstract submissions and a strong emphasis on digital dentistry.

As part of the programme, the second edition of the Young Dentists Forum underscores the dental profession's commitment to nurturing the next generation of dentists. The forum will gather hundreds of dental practitioners, researchers and students from around the world, providing a platform for sharing the latest insights and leveraging networking opportunities.

Renowned expert Dr Miguel Stanley is a presenter at the Young Dentists Forum. "It is a big deal to be invited by FDI, and I truly am grateful for the opportunity to engage with the future leaders in dentistry. It is also a fantastic opportunity to meet and interact with dental experts from around the world who will be coming to Istanbul for this unique event in dentistry. FDIWDC24 promises to be a rich platform for the exchange of ideas and knowledge on a global scale," he said in a recent interview. [See page 12 for the complete interview.]

### Scientific programme and interactive formats

At FDIWDC24, 279 speakers are delivering leading-edge lectures on the most critical topics in dentistry. New interactive formats are being introduced, including 16 meet-the-expert sessions and 28 hands-on workshops, providing opportunities for participants to engage with key leaders and the latest scientific developments. In total, FDIWDC24 will host over 150 sessions, taking

place in parallel over ten halls. [See the main FDI sessions on pages 16 and 17.]

### Exhibition and industry partners

The FDIWDC24 exhibition allows industry leaders to showcase their latest innovations and participants to discover the newest advancements to enhance their practices. Industry partners also contribute to the scientific programme, sharing their innovations and advancements in dental education through special sessions. Overall, more than 150 companies are exhibiting at FDIWDC24. [See pages 20–26 for information from exhibitors.]

### Istanbul Declaration and focus on oral health

Eleven years ago, during the 2013 FDI World Dental Congress, the *Istanbul Declaration* was adopted, focusing on integrating oral health into overall health. Through this declaration, FDI and its members called for



| Explore the full scientific programme.

expanding the scope of dental practice to improve the general health and well-being of the communities they serve.

"For the last 20 years, I have been regularly attending the World Dental Congress and am impressed by the speed with which priorities and goals within FDI policy are changing," said FDIWDC24 speaker and green dentistry advocate Dr Hrvoje Pezo. "Recognising crucial topics on the periphery of the profession, such as green dentistry, positions FDI as a world leader in driving change and contributing to the public good. Its influence extends beyond health, embracing a wide range of innovative ideas," he continued. [Read the complete interview on page 13.]

### FDI strategic plan 2024–2027

FDIWDC24 is being held in accordance with FDI's new strategic plan, which focuses on three key pillars: advocacy, knowledge exchange and innovation. This strategy is aimed at realising FDI's vision of a world with optimal oral health.



## Welcome from Turkish Dental Association president

Experience an exciting continuing education journey at FDIWDC24.



Dr Tarık İşmen.

Esteemed colleagues, it is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of the Turkish Dental Association, extend my warmest welcome to you in Istanbul for FDIWDC24. As the president of the Turkish Dental Association, I am deeply proud to share with you the rich history and vibrant culture of both Türkiye and the magnificent city of Istanbul.

The World Dental Congress is a distinguished event in dentistry, bringing together professionals from all over the world to share knowledge, exchange ideas and explore the latest advancements in dental science and practice. Over these four congress days, I encourage you to make the most of this exceptional opportunity to engage with leading experts, participate in cutting-edge workshops and attend insightful presentations covering a wide range of topics related to oral health.

I sincerely hope that during your time at FDIWDC24 you will fully embrace the exceptional opportunities for continuing education and networking. Additionally, I hope that you will leave Türkiye with cherished memories of our country's unique heritage and the warm hospitality that defines it.

We hope that you have a wonderful time in Istanbul and enjoy your stay with us. Together, let us explore the latest developments in the world of dental practice, make new friends, reconnect with old ones and discover the magic of this beautiful city.

**Dr Tarık İşmen**  
Turkish Dental Association president

## Welcome from FDI president Dr Greg Chadwick

Uniting global dental leaders for innovation, collaboration and excellence in advancing oral health worldwide.

Warm greetings and a heartfelt welcome to historic Istanbul for the 2024 FDI World Dental Congress (FDIWDC24)! First and foremost, we would like to thank each of you for attending the event. Your dedication to joining us speaks volumes about your commitment to our profession.

Together with our co-hosts, the Turkish Dental Association, we are honoured to present a robust scientific programme and expansive exhibition aimed at advancing the science and art of dentistry. Beyond being a conference, our congress represents a unified effort to advance dental care globally. It serves as a catalyst for advancing global oral health standards, fostering international collaboration among dental professionals and highlighting cutting-edge research and innovation in the field. We are confident that the captivating blend of scientific insights and profound discussions set against the backdrop of the iconic city of Istanbul will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression.



Dr Greg Chadwick.

We encourage you to maximise your participation at FDIWDC24 by actively engaging in scientific sessions, networking with peers and exploring the interactive exhibition. We would also like to invite you to visit the FDI booth #A24 at the exhibition to discover more about the impactful initiatives we are advancing alongside our members and key stakeholders. There are numerous activities to explore and draw inspiration from, including addressing excessive sugar consumption, promoting sustainability in dentistry,

leading global advocacy efforts and raising awareness through World Oral Health Day.

We hope that you will be able to make the most of the continuing education and learning opportunities presented at this extraordinary event to expand both your personal and professional horizons.

Thank you for your participation, and I hope you have a productive, inspiring and unforgettable experience at FDIWDC24.

**Dr Greg Chadwick**  
FDI president

Discover the full  
FDIWDC24 scientific  
programme



### World Dental Daily

About the Publisher

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# “Everyone has a role to play in tackling antimicrobial resistance”: What’s yours?

| An interview with Dr Wendy Thompson.

Iveta Ramonaite, Dental Tribune International



Dr Wendy Thompson is a clinical senior lecturer in primary dental care at the University of Manchester in the UK.

**A**ntimicrobial resistance (AMR) is an increasingly critical global health issue. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), bacterial AMR was directly responsible for 1.27 million deaths and contributed to 4.95 million deaths globally in 2019. In this interview, Dental Tribune International speaks with Dr Wendy Thompson, who is a dentist and chair of FDI’s Preventing AMR and Infections Task Team. Dr Thompson shares insights on the vital role antibiotics play in modern dental practices, the dangers of over-prescribing and the urgent need for stewardship within the dental community. She also discusses the importance of preventive care, the responsibilities of dental professionals and the upcoming UN General Assembly meeting on AMR.

**Dr Thompson, you are one of the leading advocates for the safe and responsible use of antibiotics. Could you start by explaining the importance of antibiotics in dentistry and why it is crucial to use them only when needed?**

Antibiotics are life-saving drugs when people really need them, and they must work effectively when required. They underpin modern medicine: without effective antibiotics, many procedures would simply be unsafe. Our modern way of life relies heavily on antibiotics, and we are already seeing life expectancies being reduced globally owing to antibiotic resistance. Dental infections can lead to sepsis, which is a significant concern. Therefore, ensuring that antibiotics work is crucial for patient safety.

Dentists are high prescribers of antibiotics, and misuse contributes to antibiotic resistance. Dentists have a vital role to use antibiotics only when absolutely

necessary. We are equipped and trained to treat dental infections early, identifying potential problems before they become infections through routine check-ups and preventive care. By nipping issues in the bud, we can prevent infections and thus reduce the need for antibiotics, keeping them effective for life-threatening situations, both dental and otherwise.

Globally, dentists are responsible for about 10% of antibiotic prescribing, and studies have shown that a significant proportion of these prescriptions are unnecessary. For example, studies in the US show that up to 80% of antibiotics prescribed by dentists are not necessarily needed. The situation can be even more pronounced in developing countries, where the impact of antibiotic resistance can be disproportionately severe. Infections do not respect boundaries, so this is a global issue. The adverse outcomes of antibiotics, such as anaphylaxis and *Clostridioides difficile* infections, highlight the need for judicious use of these drugs.

**Repeated exposure to antibiotics promotes antibiotic resistance. Could you explain why this could be dangerous?**

Repeated exposure to antibiotics is dangerous because each time you take an antibiotic, it kills susceptible bacteria, but some bacteria will always survive because they are not affected by that particular antibiotic. This can lead to overgrowth of resistant bacteria or fungi, such as thrush, which thrive when the susceptible bacteria are eliminated. For instance, *C. difficile* can colonise the gut after antibiotics clear out other bacteria, producing toxins that can cause severe illness or

death. Similarly, if a patient with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is given antibiotics, the susceptible bacteria are cleared out, leaving the resistant ones to proliferate, potentially leading to life-threatening infections.

WHO emphasises patient advocacy to explain AMR to the public. People often do not realise the true cause of death in cases where resistance has played a significant role.

Vanessa Carter’s\* story is a poignant example of AMR. Her facial prosthesis failed due to a MRSA infection after multiple antibiotic treatments for various injuries. Her experience highlights the dangers of repeated antibiotic exposure.

**You are the lead author of FDI’s white paper on dental antibiotics. What role does the dental team play in AMR, and how can they be better supported in tackling the issue?**

The dental team’s role in tackling antibiotic resistance involves three key areas from WHO’s national action plan: raising awareness, preventing and controlling infections, and antibiotic stewardship. Firstly, raising awareness is crucial not only within our professional circles but also among the general population. All dental team members, including receptionists, should be knowledgeable about antibiotic resistance. They should be able to explain why antibiotics may not be the best solution and the risks involved, thus seeking to keep patients safe.

Secondly, preventing and controlling infections is about more than just disinfection and decontamination. Dental infections are common

globally, and preventing them through good oral hygiene, dietary advice and timely dental care is vital. By treating issues early, we can avoid the need for antibiotics. During the COVID-19 pandemic, dentistry proved effective in infection control, showing that we are well equipped to handle such challenges.

Lastly, antibiotic stewardship means prescribing antibiotics only when strictly necessary. This requires access to time and resources for proper dental procedures rather than resorting to antibiotics as a quick fix. WHO has guidelines for dental conditions that may need antibiotics, such as dental abscesses and noma—a neglected tropical disease that starts as gingivitis. Each country should tailor these guidelines to their specific context to balance risks and benefits effectively.

To make FDI’s white paper more accessible, we produced an interactive online course and a pledge committing to these principles for national dental associations to sign. We are currently analysing feedback from these associations to improve our approach further and will be presenting the results in the coming months.

**This September, the UN General Assembly will hold its second high-level meeting on AMR, providing world leaders with the opportunity to address the threat of AMR to global health. Could you tell us a bit about the significance of this event and how it will contribute to reducing the spread of infections that are resistant to antimicrobial medicines?**

The UN General Assembly’s involvement in AMR highlights its

global importance. This is only the fourth health issue that the UN General Assembly has taken up, after HIV/Aids, Ebola and non-communicable diseases. The first high-level meeting on AMR in 2016 recognised the severe threat AMR poses to human health, animal health and the environment.

The 2024 high-level meeting will update the global action plan on AMR, emphasising a One Health approach that integrates human, animal and environmental health. This collaboration between WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health, the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization and the UN Environment Programme aims to address AMR comprehensively. Ensuring that oral health is included in this agenda is crucial, as dental infections and antibiotic use play a significant role in AMR.

**How is FDI preparing for this meeting to ensure that oral health is included in the antimicrobial stewardship agenda?**

FDI is working with various partners, including the World Medical Association and the World Health Professions Alliance, to ensure that oral health is part of the AMR agenda. We have had discussions with WHO to determine how best to contribute to this effort. At the UN high-level meeting, we will advocate for universal access to oral healthcare as a crucial component of AMR prevention and control.

We will also highlight the effectiveness of dental infection prevention and control measures and the need for proper guidelines to reduce unnecessary antibiotic use. Educating the public and healthcare professionals about the appropriate use of antibiotics in dental care is essential to combat AMR. By raising awareness and promoting best practices, we can play a significant role in reducing the spread of resistant infections.

Everyone has a role to play in tackling AMR. We must all work together to keep antibiotics effective for future generations.

\*Vanessa Carter is an antibiotic resistance survivor and patient advocate from South Africa. More information can be found at [vanessacarter.co.za](http://vanessacarter.co.za).

Editorial note: Dr Wendy Thompson will be one of the speakers in the session titled “Antibiotics are supposed to help, aren’t they? The risks and benefits of antibiotics in dentistry”, which will be held on Thursday, 12 September, from 11:30 to 12:30. The session will take place in the Hisar hall on the Rumeli mezzanine floor of ICEC.





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# “We have long been committed to implementing eco-friendly processes at Ars Salutaris”

| An interview with green dentistry advocate Dr Hrvoje Pezo.

Iveta Ramonaite, Dental Tribune International



| Dr Hrvoje Pezo is the co-owner of Ars Salutaris dental clinic in Croatia.

In recent years, the global dental industry has been increasingly focusing on sustainability, recognising the need to reduce its environmental impact while maintaining high-quality patient care. As part of this movement, Ars Salutaris, a dental clinic in Croatia, has become a beacon of eco-friendly innovation, winning the prestigious FDI Sustainability Award in 2023. Dental Tribune International spoke with co-owner Dr Hrvoje Pezo about the clinic's journey towards sustainability, the challenges and successes encountered along the way and the role of digital technology in shaping the future of green dentistry.

**Dr Pezo, what prompted you to incorporate sustainability into your dental clinic, and what advantages have you observed as a result?**

Through my clinical work over many years, I have been burdened by the fact that we as dental professionals produce a huge amount of waste, which is often not only biological waste but also waste that is difficult to biodegrade or materials such as amalgam that have a significant impact on our environment. Conversely, I am also delighted that the modern digital workflow reduces waste to a certain extent, thus minimising our environmental impact.

When talking about sustainable dentistry, we often first think of waste reduction, rational use of resources and renewable energy sources. However, the sustainability story is extremely complex and offers many more opportunities to act in an environmentally responsible way.

At Ars Salutaris, we have developed a doctrine that focuses on sustainability by engaging our employees and patients in addressing environmental challenges. While researching existing literature, I found a lack of information on how transportation choices affect the accessibility of dental services. This led us to consider how much impact we could have by encouraging patients to walk, cycle or use public transport when visiting our clinic. Additionally, communication between the dental laboratory and the office, particularly when dealing with multiple prosthetic restorations, significantly contributes to environmental pollution. These are processes that we may assume are beyond our control, but that is not the case.

From an economic and entrepreneurial perspective, incorporating sustainability into a system ensures process optimisation, and each optimisation contributes to progress towards environmental goals.

Consequently, designing any organisation with sustainability in mind, including dental practices of all sizes, actively supports eco-friendly initiatives.

**What steps have you taken to make your dental clinic more eco-friendly, and which has had the most significant impact?**

We have long been committed to implementing eco-friendly processes at Ars Salutaris. We began with fundamental initiatives, such as installing solar panels, introducing water-saving systems and removing calcification without using electricity, chemicals or salt. Additionally, we have upgraded to energy-efficient lighting fixtures with motion sensors and provided specialised education and training for both our employees and our patients.

We relocated the dental laboratory to the same building as the clinic, an expensive step but the benefits have been substantial. This move has improved professional efficiency and significantly reduced the energy used for transporting materials and facilitating communication between the clinic, laboratory and patients.

By rationalising material consumption, we not only achieve economic value but also significantly reduce waste. Unfortunately, our efforts to incorporate green guidelines into our entire supply chain have often not achieved the results we are striving for. Therefore, it can be challenging to choose between suppliers with similar green agendas who contribute positively to our supply chain's environmental impact. Since Croatia is a small market, finding suppliers that meet our criteria for quality, price and contribution to green dentistry is particularly difficult.

I am deeply concerned that the dental industry does not adequately emphasise sustainable practices that could reduce its environmental impact. During the numerous congresses and exhibitions I have attended, this topic has been rarely addressed and only modestly by a few individuals. This lack of focus is troubling, and I believe our profession is significantly lagging in developing and implementing new, environmentally friendly ideas.

**Digital dentistry was once met with scepticism by many dentists, but it is now seen as a key enabler of sustainable practices. What is your opinion on the role of digital technology, including the use of artificial intelligence, in modern dentistry?**

I partially agree with ecosceptics. While I support sustainability, I believe that we cannot embrace radical ideas if they compromise quality or endanger our patients. When analysing the actual contributions to sustainability in other industries, I often find that the outcomes do not result in genuine ecological progress and may even threaten our environment. Industries are very skilled at marketing these ideas, and we as consumers are not always able to recognise this.

For this reason, we must exercise caution when implementing modern materials and technologies in our profession. The benefits of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in patient treatment are undeniable. However, we must consider the real costs and justify the price of these systems, as both resources and clinic funds are valuable and must be used wisely. I frequently discuss this topic in the context of the clinic's policy because the rational management of resources in our supply chain is a critical issue.

Further monitoring of the behaviour of new materials in the environment after use is essential, and I am pleased to see that the world, especially the EU, is taking political action on this issue. The increasing use of acrylates for 3D printers, zirconia instead of metals, new composites, silicones and other chemicals will certainly raise these questions in the future.

**Achieving sustainability requires a team effort. How important is it to train staff and educate patients about sustainable practices?**

Teamwork is something that brings success to any endeavour, including green dentistry. In establishing the framework, systems, policies and procedures that shape how the dental practice operates, Ars Salutaris employed tools that are widely recognised in health economics to develop a doctrine incorporating the elements of sustainability. Doctrine and strategy are crucial components of any organisation, representing core values that are implicitly understood rather than debated. Patients quickly recognise and embrace these models, often integrating them into their behaviour patterns to varying degrees.

I often raise questions that seem to have little to do with dentistry, but their inclusion in patient communication tools gives excellent results. Through our clinic and the Red Cross of the city of Zagreb, I am engaging in discussions about food

waste, which can be conveniently introduced during conversations about oral hygiene or when discussing a dental treatment plan. People would be surprised how sensitive patients and the public are to unnecessary food waste but also to the impact of diet on our oral and systemic health.

**Eco-sustainability is gradually becoming a standard concern in dental practices worldwide. In your opinion, what support is still needed to facilitate the transition to sustainable dentistry?**

We still have a long way to go in amplifying the eco-friendly impact of our profession on our planet. As you mentioned earlier, it requires a team effort, not only by health professionals and patients but also by the dental industry, the media, politicians and civil society organisations.

I am very grateful to Dental Tribune International and FDI for covering this topic. The visibility of such ideas and the promotion of individuals seeking to implement change are vital in our society. That support will open up many more opportunities for sustainability that we encounter every day without recognising them. Addressing seemingly simple questions about replacing gloves with biodegradable ones and finding a disposable cup that does not contain any plastic foils or coatings eventually becomes impossible, and we very often give up on them.

**How effective is the FDI Sustainability in Dentistry interactive toolkit in providing actionable ideas for implementing sustainable practices in dentistry?**

For the last 20 years, I have been regularly attending the World Dental Congress and am impressed by the speed with which priorities and goals within FDI policy are changing. Recognising crucial topics on the periphery of the profession, such as green dentistry, positions FDI as a world leader in driving change and contributing to the public good. Its influence extends beyond health, embracing a wide range of innovative ideas. I believe that FDI's involvement in sustainability and ecology is crucial because it supports our national organisations, which often do not address these topics. FDI's tools for implementing these ideas are not only useful but also globally significant.

*Editorial note: Dr Hrvoje Pezo will be one of the speakers in a session titled “Practical applications of sustainability in dentistry”, which will be held on Friday, 13 September, from 14:00 to 16:00. The session will take place in the Hisar hall on the Rumeli mezzanine floor of ICEC.*



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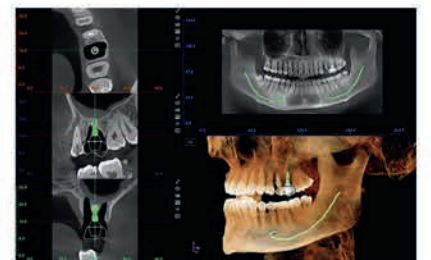
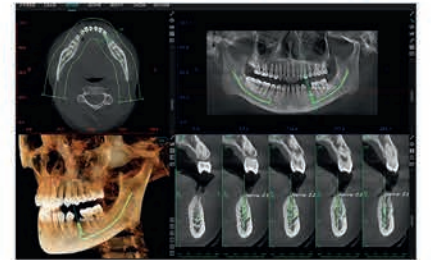
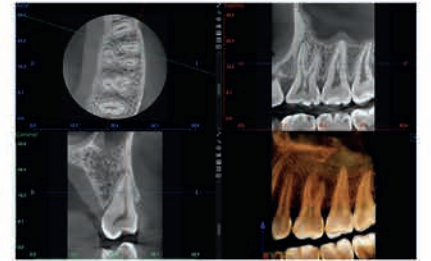


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# “Oral health is a fundamental human right”

| An interview with Dr Elham Talib Kateeb on refugee oral health promotion.

Iveta Ramonaite, Dental Tribune International



Dr Elham Talib Kateeb is an associate professor of dental public health in the Faculty of Dentistry and dean of scientific research at Al-Quds University, East Jerusalem in Palestine.

On World Refugee Day, FDI World Dental Federation unveiled a pivotal policy brief titled *Addressing Oral Health Needs in Refugees: Policy and Collaboration Strategies*. This comprehensive document, developed under the leadership of FDI's Public Health Committee, which is chaired by Dr Elham Talib Kateeb, and in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), underscores the urgent need to tackle the oral health challenges faced by refugees. In this interview, Dental Tribune International speaks with Dr Kateeb about the importance of coordinated efforts and strategic collaboration to ensure that refugees receive essential oral healthcare, which is a fundamental component of overall well-being.

**Dr Kateeb, why is it now more important than ever to advocate for improved refugee oral healthcare?**

Today, our world is witnessing unprecedented levels of suffering and displacement due to wars, conflicts, natural disasters, oppression, discrimination and corruption. The nature of warfare nowadays is different from before, and more than 90% of casualties in any conflict are civilians. Crises continue to displace millions, depriving them of their basic rights to security, clean water, food, shelter and access to healthcare. According to UNHCR figures, by the end of 2023, more than 110 million displaced individuals were living in constant fear for their lives and well-being. Among

them, there are 36.4 million refugees—that number has doubled in just seven years—the majority originating from developing countries that already face challenges in healthcare infrastructure and prevalent oral disease.

Research indicates that refugees experience higher rates of oral health issues and encounter substantial obstacles in accessing dental services compared with other vulnerable groups. Notably, 75% of refugees reside in low- and middle-income countries, where they are confronted by significant barriers, such as limited resources, cultural and language differences, mistrust and a shortage of skilled healthcare professionals willing to serve these populations.

Refugees' right to health, including oral health, is affirmed by international conventions such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 1951 Refugee Convention. Current global initiatives such as the World Health Organization's *Global Strategy and Action Plan on Oral Health 2023–2030* and FDI's *Vision 2030* emphasise the necessity of integrating essential oral health interventions into primary healthcare and achieving universal health coverage (UHC). In light of these, there is a pivotal opportunity to advocate for including refugees in comprehensive primary care packages.

**Could you discuss some critical issues outlined in FDI's policy brief that are affecting refugee oral health?**

Ensuring oral health is a crucial component of overall well-being, especially for refugees, who experience a significant burden of oral health issues, such as untreated dental caries, periodontal disease, oral infections and trauma. Addressing these needs requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders. Despite international commitments to UHC and to safeguarding of refugees' rights to health, a significant gap remains in providing adequate general health and oral health services to refugees. Challenges such as financial constraints, lack of trust and a shortage of skilled healthcare professionals are exacerbated in conflict settings, where limited resources and population displacement further hinder the delivery of health interventions.

A survey conducted by FDI in 2019 highlighted that only a small fraction of respondent countries provided obligatory oral health screenings for refugees upon arrival and even fewer offered oral health referral services. Emergency oral healthcare was the most common type of care provided, whereas preventive and therapeutic dental care were less frequently available. In nearly a quarter of the countries surveyed, no oral healthcare was provided. This underscores the need for stronger policy



The Refugee Crisis Foundation, a UK-registered charity, has implemented a comprehensive toothbrushing programme in two schools within the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh, with support from FDI and local partners.

development and international collaboration to integrate oral health into primary healthcare systems for refugees with the aim of ensuring that they receive comprehensive care without financial hardship.

Promoting oral healthcare for refugees aligns with broader international commitments to UHC and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, contributing to social inclusion, equality and global health equity. Investing in refugee oral health initiatives not only fulfils moral obligations but also advances the health and dignity of refugees worldwide.

We repeated the 2019 survey in 2024 and will present the results in our congress session. We will also discuss whether there has been any progress in countries' activities and policies related to refugee oral health.

**What solutions does the brief propose to tackle the challenges related to refugee oral health?**

To tackle the challenges related to refugee oral health, the brief emphasises the need for policy changes and the integration of oral health into primary healthcare systems. FDI and UNHCR in this brief advocate for national and international policies that ensure comprehensive healthcare

provision, addressing both acute and preventive oral healthcare needs. Recognising oral health as an essential component of overall well-being, the brief highlights the importance of workforce availability, training and resource allocation tailored to refugee populations. It also stresses the importance of developing research systems to understand critical oral health needs and track the impact of interventions, supporting the appropriateness of care through the perspectives of refugees.

In addition, the policy brief details the actions that need to be taken in different phases of any refugee crisis. In terms of preparedness and mitigation, integrating oral health into primary healthcare systems is crucial. This includes increasing support and funding from governments, international organisations and non-governmental organisations to strengthen oral health strategies, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Developing culturally appropriate oral healthcare programmes in collaboration with international organisations helps effectively address the unique needs of diverse refugee populations. During emergencies, essential oral healthcare services should be included in initial responses, focusing on disease management and stabilisation, education, prevention and the accessibility of fluoride toothpaste. Integrating oral healthcare into established public health programmes ensures comprehensive care during crises.

Post-emergency, the brief calls for establishing mechanisms for collecting data on refugee oral health status to inform evidence-based interventions and policy adjustments. Empowering refugee communities by involving them in decision-making processes, health education initiatives and advocacy efforts supports long-term sustainability and resilience.

**You will be one of the speakers in a session titled “Oral health as a human**



As part of the programme, school teachers received training from Refugee Crisis Foundation dentists to instruct the children on proper brushing techniques.

right for refugees—promoting equity and access in refugee oral health” at FDIWDC24. What will some of the biggest takeaways from your presentation be?

One of the key takeaways from my presentation will be the emphasis that oral healthcare is essential even in times of displacement. The high burden of oral disease among refugees, as documented in the limited data we have, calls for concentrated efforts to change policies, train the workforce and improve research and data in this area.

Oral health is a fundamental human right, yet refugees often face significant barriers to accessing essential oral healthcare. Addressing their oral health needs is crucial for promoting equity and protecting the most vulnerable populations, ensuring that they receive necessary care regardless of socio-economic or migratory status.

Integrating oral health into UHC frameworks is essential for achieving comprehensive healthcare for all, including refugees. By including oral health services in UHC schemes, governments and international organisations can ensure that refugees have access to essential dental care without financial hardship, contributing to their overall health and well-being.

Improving oral health aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 3 (good health and

well-being), Goal 5 (gender equality) and Goal 10 (reduced inequalities). By prioritising refugee oral health, countries can make significant progress towards achieving these global development objectives and reducing health inequalities.

In addition, our efforts at individual, organisational and advocacy levels must go beyond immediate relief. We must champion justice, equality, equity, freedom and peace to address the root causes of conflicts and displacement. Although ambitious, this mission is vital. As researchers, dentists and the public health community, it is our responsibility to commit to this personal mission, contributing to alleviating the suffering around the world and building a future where every community can thrive in health, well-being and dignity.

#### How is FDI working to meet the oral health needs of refugees?

Since launching the Refugee Oral Health Promotion and Care Project in 2018, FDI has been dedicated to enhancing access to oral care services for refugees globally and locally. A key initiative was the 2019 survey on need assessment, which gathered responses from 78 countries, providing insights into those countries’ activities and national policies related to refugee oral health and the involvement of national dental associations in these activities. The survey’s findings were used to develop a

comprehensive advocacy toolkit. This toolkit offers practical guidance and resources, policy recommendations, clinical guidelines and best practices for promoting oral health awareness among refugees.

In addition to data collection, FDI has fostered international collaboration with organisations such as UNHCR, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the World Federation of Public Health Associations, the Lancet Migration European Regional Hub, the Sustainable Health Equity Movement and the Framework Convention on Global Health Alliance. We also worked closely with the International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research and the World Health Organization’s oral health department to address the unique oral health challenges faced by refugees and released five joint policy briefs and statements to draw attention to their needs. FDI also targets future dentists through lectures, webinars and workshops offered to dental students, residents and other healthcare professionals to raise awareness and push for advocacy for improved policies and resources.

Collaborating with local and national dental associations, ground-level charities and regional organisations has enhanced the impact of these initiatives. By funding dental missions and providing resources



Under the supervision of a teacher, children practice daily handwashing and toothbrushing with fluoridated toothpaste at designated stations in the schools.

and technical support for therapeutic and preventive interventions, FDI helps refugees receive the essential oral healthcare they desperately need. Four examples that will be presented in detail in our congress session are the FDI project with Pakistan Dental Association to improve access to care for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, FDI support to Refugee Crisis Foundation and Bangladesh Dental Society to promote hand and oral hygiene among children in the Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh, the FDI campaign for medical and dental supplies for Ukraine refugees in host countries and FDI collaboration

with the Palestinian Dental Association and Health-Point Foundation to fund a dental mission to Middle Eastern refugees on the island of Lesbos in Greece through the FDI Smile Grant.

FDI plans to continue advocating for better access to oral healthcare among refugees globally and to empower national dental associations to get more involved with activities and policies that promote better oral health in this vulnerable population. FDI is using all the means available and drawing on all its partnerships to achieve this goal.

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