

Future research directions in oral health

The two common oral diseases affecting people worldwide that lead to tooth destruction and tooth loss are dental caries and periodontal disease. Untreated caries and periodontal disease give rise to pain and discomfort both in children and adults. Both diseases are preventable, with methods and practices developed and implemented in controlling the diseases among individuals and populations.

Other oral diseases and conditions that are less prevalent, yet serious and sometimes life-threatening are: Oral precancer and cancer, oral manifestations of human immunodeficiency virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome and developmental disorders like cleft lip and palate. Recent studies suggest that poor oral hygiene affects general health, giving rise to heart and lung diseases, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, low birth weight and premature births.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends health promotion strategies based on the common risk-factor approach, which targets risk factors that contribute to a large group of preventable chronic diseases. Smoking, alcohol, diets rich in fats and sugars and low in fibers, stress, poor hygiene and sedentary lifestyle are factors leading to major chronic diseases like cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, dental caries and periodontal disease. These risk factors for major chronic diseases are often seen in the same individuals. The WHO Oral Health Programme supports the common risk-factors approach, with development of

activities in health promotion and disease prevention, involving health education, community empowerment and legislative policy development.

The *European Journal of General Dentistry* is a peer-reviewed, open access journal that aims to publish original research articles, review articles and clinical studies in all areas of dentistry, including preventive dentistry, restorative dentistry and oral surgery. The objective of this journal is to stimulate interest, debate, discussion and interaction among dentists and specialists of all disciplines within the field of dentistry.

I hope that the *European Journal of General Dentistry* will spearhead new research directions and contribute to significant development and healthy debate in Dentistry worldwide. I wish the Editorial team the very best.



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