

Public Health Committee

General Assembly 2024

This report was generated on 25 June 2024 and summarizes all the activities undertaken by the Public Health Committee (PHC) since the General Assembly in September 2023.

Policy Statements

The following policy statements will be submitted to the General Assembly in 2024:

1. **Early Childhood Caries** (new) led by Assoc. Prof. Dr Elham Kateeb
2. **Oral Health and NCDs** (revision) led by Prof. Dr Hiroshi Ogawa
3. **Special Care Needs** (new) led by Prof. Dr Chun-hung Chu

PHC also worked on a revision of the policy statement entitled “**National Oral Health Policy**” with Dr Marco Mazevet as lead author, however, it was withdrawn by FDI Council.

Policy statements planned for 2025 include:

1. **Silver Diamine Fluoride** (New) led by Prof. Chun-hung Chu
2. **Topical Fluorides** (Revision) led by Dr Elizabeth Shick & Prof. Chun-hung Chu
3. **Systemic Fluorides** (Revision) led by Dr Elizabeth Shick

Public Health Committee Fora

The 2024 PHC-CDO Forum, scheduled for Thursday 12 September from 16:00–17:00, during the World Dental Congress (WDC) is entitled ‘**Implementing UHC: Cases from around the world**’. Dr Olabode Ijarogbe is coordinating this forum, and three speakers are planned to present on the following topics:

- **Dr Marco Mazevet** (France): FDI project on UHC implementation.
- **Dr Aaron Burry** (Canada): UHC implementation in Canada.
- **Dr Natifah Che Salleh** (Malaysia): UHC implementation in Malaysia.

The 2025 PHC-CDO Forum will focus on the Integration of oral health in NCDs with a focus on sugar. The chair for the session will be decided after the election of new PHC members.

Public Health Committee projects 2024

Educational module for other healthcare professionals

Background

Most oral diseases are preventable through simple, evidence-based interventions. Engaging various healthcare professionals (HCPs) in promoting oral health will expand access to oral healthcare, especially in marginalized and underserved populations. In various healthcare settings, HCPs often encounter oral health issues for which they have not been trained to manage. The developed resources can help address this gap. Orienting HCPs to oral health also promotes effective interprofessional collaboration, using a common risk factor approach to address the health and well-being of patients. Recent global initiatives indicate that interventions to counter non-communicable diseases present ideal opportunities to promote better oral health based on the common risk factor approach. The issue of the low density

of dentists in many parts of the world is well known. To expand access to oral health and achieve the goal of affordable and accessible healthcare for all, it is necessary to engage HCPs in the prevention and control of oral diseases.

Project update

A total 16 factsheets for other healthcare professionals that provide basic oral health knowledge and essential practical skills are under development: 1) Understanding dental caries; 2) Periodontal disease; 3) Oral health in pregnancy; 4) Oral adverse drug reactions; 5) Child oral health; 6) Adult oral health; 7) Geriatric oral health; 8) The relationship between oral and systemic disease; 9) Raising awareness about global oral health; 10) Oral lesions and oral cancer; 11) Tobacco use and oral health; 12) Fluoride varnish application; 13) Dietary advice; 14) Oral hygiene; 15) Basic oral examination; 16) Overview of oral cavity and oral health.

FDI experts from PHC as well as external experts collaborated to draft the factsheets. The fact sheets are supported by eight international organizations representing other healthcare professionals that will help with the dissemination of the resources.

Next steps

The 13 finalized factsheets will be professionally designed and disseminated following final approval from FDI Council. The three remaining factsheets will undergo review by the Dental Practice and Science Committees and external editing prior to Council approval. Videos are also being produced in collaboration with the International Pharmaceutical Federation to help extend the reach of three of the fact sheets to pharmacists.

Refugee Oral Health Promotion and Care

Background

To promote oral health for vulnerable populations, PHC developed materials and generated guidance information for refugees and people on the move over the past few years. Previously, the PHC collected data from FDI members to understand their level of knowledge and involvement in promoting oral health for the refugee population. An advocacy guide was developed to support NDAs in creating promotional strategies.

Project update

WHO Global High-Level Technical Meeting on NCDs in Humanitarian Settings

The meeting was held in Copenhagen in February 2024, with Assoc. Prof. Elham Kateeb, chair of PHC representing FDI. The objective of the meeting was to build political momentum and discuss developing a comprehensive approach to NCDs in humanitarian settings. FDI developed a joint advocacy brief with IADR, which was sent to over 100 Permanent Mission Representatives ahead of the meeting. The main outcome for FDI was the reiterated importance of addressing oral health in the closing remarks.

Projects supported by FDI

The project leads in Pakistan and Bangladesh have continued their oral health promotion activities. The Pakistan Dental Association (PDA) continues to provide care to refugees settling in remote villages in Pakistan. These communities are provided with basic oral health services and referred to secondary oral healthcare services when required. The Refugee Crisis Foundation (RCF) has continued the project in Bangladesh, promoting hand and oral hygiene among children in the Rohingya refugee camp. A new proposal and agreement from RCF to expand the project in Bangladesh has been signed. This new project proposal focuses on oral hygiene education at home. Children, parents, and teachers from different learning centres will be screened and receive oral hygiene education and hygiene kits. Additionally, children will

receive applications of silver diamine fluoride where required. The impact of these initiatives will be evaluated at the end of the project.

Refugee oral health policy brief

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the global refugee population reached 36.4 million in mid-2023. Refugees encounter significant challenges while trying to access healthcare and they bear a significant oral health burden evidenced by prevalent issues such as untreated dental caries, periodontal diseases, oral infections, and trauma. Recognizing the urgent need to address these challenges through coordinated policy actions at national and international levels a [joint policy brief](#) titled 'Addressing oral health needs in refugees: policy and collaboration strategies' was developed under the leadership of PHC and UNHCR, with the support of the WHO Oral Health Programme and the International Association for Dental, Cranial and Orofacial Research (IADR). It was launched during World Refugee Day on 20 June.

NDA survey

A survey has been sent to FDI members to understand if countries have policies in place to support refugees' access to oral health. The results of the survey will inform the continuation of the project, as well as an article to be submitted to the *International Dental Journal*.

Next steps

Discussions are underway to determine the most strategic way forward for this project.

Tobacco Cessation

Background

Since 2020, PHC has been promoting tobacco cessation within the oral health community. A scientific review aimed at informing oral health professionals laid the foundation for developing recommendations to assist dentists in helping their patients modify their behaviour and quit tobacco use. These recommendations, such as 'Tobacco Cessation Guidance for Oral Health Professionals', are complemented by educational animated videos and an FDI Factsheet titled "The Effects of E-cigarettes on Oral Health." Additionally, a policy statement was developed on 'The Role of Oral Health Practitioners in Tobacco Cessation.' Related dissemination strategies and capacity-building workshops on tobacco cessation were also designed and implemented.

Project update

A call for applications for NDA-led tobacco cessation workshops was sent to members in January 2024. From the applications received, PHC selected seven NDAs to receive a tobacco cessation grant of CHF 1,000 each, enabling them to implement a workshop in their country in 2024. The selected countries included: Sri Lanka, Cook Islands, Lebanon, Egypt, Fiji, Kyrgyzstan, and Kenya.

The committee experts established a comprehensive workshop evaluation process, incorporating three different survey forms: a pre-workshop survey for participants to determine their familiarity with providing tobacco cessation advice and their expectations for the workshop; a post-workshop survey for participants to evaluate the workshop and assess behaviour changes afterward; and a post-workshop survey for the NDAs to evaluate the workshop concept, their involvement in tobacco cessation advocacy activities, and the need for policy changes regarding tobacco cessation in their country.

Next steps

The remaining NDA-led tobacco cessation workshops are to be implemented by the end of 2024. Additionally, the data collected from the pre- and post-workshop evaluation surveys will be analysed to inform the project priorities for 2025. The Science Committee and the Public Health Committee are working together on an article about e-cigarettes and vaping, which will be submitted for publication in the *International Dental Journal*. This will form the basis of further work in 2025. An interactive tobacco cessation training session is also scheduled to take place on 13 September from 15:30–17:30 during WDC 2024.

Universal health coverage implementation: Compendium of case studies

Background

Implementing universal health coverage (UHC) in oral health is a challenging process for both policymakers and NDAs. There are limited resources available that synthesise existing information and demonstrate how NDAs can benefit from success stories during the implementation process. Addressing these challenges will ensure that health systems are reformed in alignment with the objectives and strategy of the NDA/FDI.

Project update

To promote a better understanding of UHC and support countries' efforts in implementing actions towards it, PHC is developing a compendium of best practices in UHC for dentistry. This compendium will compile lessons learned from countries that are working to achieve UHC for oral health. It will showcase various examples of implementation from different countries.

To develop this compendium, the committee planned to conduct semi-structured interviews with a select number of countries and NDAs, including: France, Canada, Portugal, Malaysia, Thailand, Colombia and Tanzania.

Next steps

This will involve finalizing the compendium based on the country interviews and other available information. Additionally, an infographic with the results of the interviews will be developed. Both the compendium and the infographic will be translated into French and Spanish.

Working Groups and Task Teams reporting to PHC

- **Oral Health for an Ageing Population Task Team:** Prof. Kakuhiro Fukai (Chair); Prof. Judith Jones; Dr Sophie Dartevelle; Prof Hiroyuki Hirano; Prof. Gerry McKenna.

Grants overseen by PHC

Full details of these grants are included in the Projects Report to General Assembly 2024:

- **World Dental Development Fund (WDDF):** in 2024, five projects supported by the WDDF are being implemented in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru and the USA. The 2025 WDDF winners will be selected at WDC 2024 and announced in October 2024. The application deadline for the WDDF is 15 June each year.
- **Smile Grant:** two NDAs that will receive a grant for their ongoing projects will be announced at WDC 2024. The application deadline for the Smile Grant is 1 February each year.