

Media release

Ten years of patient-reported data provide global insights into oral health, FDI report finds

Drawing on findings from more than 10,000 patients across 12 countries, the report demonstrates the value of patient-centred data in informing oral health policy and advocacy.

Geneva, Switzerland, 17 July 2026 – A new report released today by FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) highlights how more than a decade of patient-reported data from over 10,000 people across 12 countries is helping to strengthen the evidence base for oral health policy, advocacy and care. The findings demonstrate the value of practice-based, patient-centred data in revealing the burden of oral diseases, their impact on people's daily lives, and the experiences of those receiving oral healthcare.

The report, *Ten years of Oral Health Observatory data: Evidence, Impact and the Road Ahead*, showcases the achievements of FDI's Oral Health Observatory (OHO) programme since its launch in 2014. Drawing on standardized data collected over the past decade, it provides unique insights into oral health status, lifestyle behaviours, the psychosocial impact of oral diseases, and patients' experiences of care, while illustrating the importance of robust data in supporting evidence-based policymaking, advocacy and health systems strengthening.

"The Oral Health Observatory was established in 2014 to address a fundamental gap in oral health data," said Asst. Prof. Dr Nikolai Sharkov, FDI President. "Over the past 10 years, the programme has shown that practice-based, patient-centred evidence can help National Dental Associations, health systems, and policymakers better understand population needs, identify priorities and drive much-needed improvements in oral healthcare."

A decade of evidence

Since its launch, OHO has collected standardized clinical and patient-reported data through participating FDI member National Dental Associations across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

Across participating countries, patients frequently reported oral pain, difficulty eating, disrupted sleep, reduced well-being and missed work days because of oral health problems, highlighting the far-reaching impact of oral diseases on daily life.

The findings have also helped identify barriers to care and unmet needs, enabling National Dental Associations to strengthen advocacy and inform policy discussions on prevention, access to care, workforce capacity and oral health system development and support evidence-based decision-making.

"Reliable, patient-centred data are essential for evidence-based policymaking," agreed the FDI OHO Task Team. "The OHO shows that when oral health professionals, researchers and National Dental Associations work together, they can generate the insights needed to shape better policies, improve oral health and reduce inequalities."

From data collection to policy action

The report showcases practical examples of how OHO findings have informed policy development and advocacy in participating countries. In Lebanon, they contributed to the development of the country's national oral health strategy. In Tanzania, they informed discussions on oral health surveillance and health insurance coverage. Other countries have used OHO data to support advocacy on prevention, tobacco control, sugar reduction and oral health literacy.

The report demonstrates the potential for practice-based data to complement national oral health surveys by capturing the experiences of people seeking oral healthcare.

Looking ahead

The report acknowledges the limitations of OHO, including its focus on people seeking treatment rather than the general population. However, it shows how practice-based surveillance can complement national oral health surveys and other population-based data by providing timely patient-centred insights that strengthen oral health information systems.

The next phase of the OHO will focus on expanding participation, strengthening national information systems and enhancing the capability of National Dental Associations to translate data into policy and action.

The report aligns with the World Health Organization's call for stronger oral health information systems and greater integration of oral health into broader health policies and universal health coverage efforts.

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About the report

[Read the full report](#)

The OHO Project is supported by Haleon.

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About FDI World Dental Federation

FDI World Dental Federation serves as the principal representative body for over one million dentists worldwide. Its membership includes some 200 national dental associations and specialist groups in over 130 countries. FDI envisions a world with optimal oral health. <https://www.fdiworldddental.org/>

About the FDI OHO Task Team

The Task Team oversees the OHO project, which aims to generate standardized data on oral health behaviours, healthcare needs, and the impact of oral health on quality of life. The data provides the basis for advocacy work carried out by FDI and National Dental Associations. The Task Team comprises Dr Michael Sereny (Chair), Prof. Sarah Baker, Prof. Georgios Tsakos and Prof. David Williams.