

WHO Southeast Asia Regional Committee 79th Session (SEA RC79)

Agenda item 9.3 Beginning of the Decade of Action for ending viral hepatitis, HIV and STIs as public health threats by 2030 in the South-East Asia Region

Documents [SEA/RC79/14](#)

Statement

FDI World Dental Federation and the International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (IADR), representing over one million dentists and more than 10,000 researchers worldwide, welcome the progress report and commend Member States for strengthened efforts to address viral hepatitis, HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) across the SEA Region.

While several countries in the region have improved HIV testing and treatment cascades, late diagnosis and low CD4 counts at treatment initiation remain important causes of morbidity and mortality. Service coverage for viral hepatitis remains critically low. Additionally, many countries rely on incomplete syndromic reporting systems, with limited aetiological testing and underdiagnosis of asymptomatic STIs. These challenges underscore the need to strengthen early detection, timely referral and integrated, people-centred care.

Oral health professionals can contribute to these efforts. Oral manifestations are among the earliest signs of HIV infection and can signal chronic inflammation, disease progression, or treatment failure. Dentists may detect oral lesions associated with STIs, including syphilis and HPV, as well as oral signs of liver damage linked to viral hepatitis. FDI's White Paper and IADR's policy statement on HPV explore the potential role of oral health professionals in supporting HPV prevention through patient education, vaccination, early detection, referral and advocacy.

To accelerate progress towards ending viral hepatitis, HIV and STIs as public health threats by 2030, we call on Member States to:

- Integrate oral health into primary health care and into HIV, viral hepatitis and STI policies, services and surveillance frameworks.
- Invest in a sufficient, well-trained health workforce, inclusive of oral health professionals, to support stigma-free prevention, early detection and treatment.

- Support research and implementation science to generate evidence on effective integrated service delivery models and improve health outcomes.

FDI and IADR stand ready to support Member States and partners in implementing these measures.

297 words