FDI releases second edition of Oral Health Atlas

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The CHALLENGE of ORAL DISEASE
A call for global action

By DTI

Bangkok, Thailand: The FDI World Dental Federation has released the second edition of its Oral Health Atlas at the Annual World Dental Congress (AWDC) in Bangkok in Thailand. Titled The Challenge of Oral Disease—A Call for Global Action, it aims to serve as an advocacy resource for all oral health care professionals and recommends strategies to address the global challenge of oral disease.

At the launch event held at the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Centre, Dr. Habib Benzian and Prof. David Williams, the publication’s editors-in-chief, presented the new edition of the Atlas and spoke with DTI group editor Daniel Zimmermann about the contents of the book and the global challenge of preventing oral disease and implementing adequate oral health care worldwide.

The first edition of the Oral Health Atlas, titled Mapping a Neglected Global Health Issue, was released at the FDI 2009 AWDC in Singapore and highlighted the extent of the problem of oral disease worldwide. The second edition of the atlas provides an update of the global health challenge and reflects on policies and strategies that address the burden of oral disease, such as tooth decay, periodontal disease and oral cancer, Benzian pointed out.

The book summarises the key oral health issues based on the latest available information from various international sources. Benzian and Williams explained, including the impact of oral disease, major risk factors and inequalities in oral health, as well as oral disease prevention and management. Moreover, it aims to ensure that oral health is granted higher priority on the global health and development agendas. Written for national dental associations, health organisations, industry professionals and the general public, the atlas provides them with the means to address policymakers, governments and local authorities based on sound facts so that they can better advocate for change in oral health-related policies, Williams said.

According to the atlas, about two-thirds of the world’s population have access to adequate oral health care, even though oral disease, particularly tooth decay, is among the most common human diseases. “Untreated tooth decay is the most common health condition of children across all countries, recently confirmed by the Global Burden of Disease Study looking at the burden of 281 diseases and conditions”, said Benzian. “Children with severe untreated tooth decay are impacted in their growth, have frequent episodes of pain, miss days in school and have a generally lower quality of life,” he continued. They also usually have the lowest access to oral health care and preventive services, added Williams. Therefore, the two editors-in-chief hope that the second edition of the Oral Health Atlas will most of all serve as an advocacy tool for institutions, policymakers and dental associations in their effort to improve access to oral health care worldwide.

The compilation of the new edition of the Oral Health Atlas was supported by the Hong Kong Dental Association and the FDI’s Vision 2020 oral health initiative. The book content includes chapters and data from 30 contributors, and was reviewed and edited by the two editors-in-chief.

The atlas can be downloaded free of charge from the FDI website and will be translated into the FDI’s official languages of French and Spanish. These versions will be available electronically in early 2016.

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**New dental school opens in Malaysia**

By DTI

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: With the completion of the new dental faculty building on Sungai Buloh Campus, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) is now operating the largest dental centre in the country. The RM73.8 million (US$17.1 million) project, which was launched seven years ago, houses Malaysia's first sterilisation and dental supply centre and will allow treatment of up to 500 patients per day.

The new building unites academic, clinical and administrative facilities for both undergraduate and postgraduate dentistry students. The faculty's state-of-the-art facilities are expected to deliver high-quality education and training for staff and students alike.

As reported online by Astro Awani, the new building houses operating theatres, wards, a radiology unit, as well as the first sterilisation and dental supply centre in Malaysia. Of the 16 clinics included in the faculty, two specialise in treating persons with disabilities.

During a press event held to celebrate the completion of the new facilities on 1 September, UiTM Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Prof. Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar stressed that the faculty's clinics will offer dental care services to people from all walks of life. "When fully operational, we estimate some 205 patients can be treated at any one time, with 400 to 500 patients per day," he said.

He further expressed his hope that the new campus will produce more competent and professional dentistry graduates to allow for the provision of the best services to the community.

The UiTM's Faculty of Dentistry was founded in 2006. Collectively, the university offers more than 300 academic programmes and has over 40,000 students on its main campus and 80,000 throughout the country. English is the sole language of teaching.