Oral health and diabetes discussed at premier event in Singapore

By DTI

SINGAPORE: Among developed nations, Singapore has the second-highest proportion of diabetics, according to a recent report by the International Diabetes Federation. As the condition continues to be a growing concern owing to the increasing sedentary lifestyle and high-calorie diets of Singaporeans, the city-state was the ideal place for the Joslin–Sunstar Diabetes Education Initiative (JSDEI) to hold its first Diabetes, Oral Health and Nutrition symposium in Asia.

The one-day event took place last month at the Swissotel “The Stamford”. Attended by Singapore Chief Dental Officer Patrick Tyng and Japanese Ambassador Haruhisa Takeuchi as part of the 53rd celebrations (a number of events to commemorate 50 years of diplomatic ties between Singapore and Japan), it provided the latest information on the two-way relationship between diabetes and oral health. Over 300 international leading medical and dental health care global experts, including Dr George King, Senior Vice President, Chief Scientific Officer and Director of Research at the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston in the US, among others, presented the latest findings on the interrelationships, innovations and interactions between periodontitis and diabetes.

Future strategies on oral and systemic health, as well as how JSDEI’s efforts at strengthening the ties between medical and dental fields were also discussed. According to the initiative, increasing evidence supports the existence of an association between periodontal disease and diabetes. The latest research has shown that not only are people with diabetes more susceptible to serious periodontal disease, but the condition may also have the potential to affect blood glucose control and contribute to the progression of diabetes.

Recognising that early and proper treatment of periodontal disease can have a profound effect on the control of diabetes and its complications, the Sunstar Foundation established the JSDEI in April 2008 with the Joslin Diabetes Center, the world’s largest diabetes research and clinical care organisation dedicated to the prevention, treatment and cure of diabetes, affiliated with the Harvard Medical School, to engage in education and research to improve knowledge and practices in this field.

In addition to its symposium in Asia, it has organised an annual event under the same name in Europe. Established almost 40 years ago, the Sunstar Foundation for Oral Health Promotion has achieved international recognition for the significant benefits to society gained through its efforts to improve oral care and promote dental health through various activities.