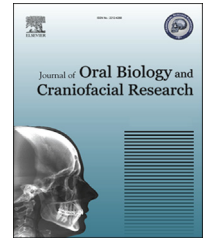


Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jobcr

Editorial

Oral sciences: History and future research



There has been an immense interest in facial esthetics and diseases of the oral cavity from times immemorial. Prehistoric man's dental history starts from skull records of 'Cromagnon' man that revealed tooth decay some 25,000 years ago. With *Homo sapiens*, the earliest historical evidence of treating tooth related problems comes from Indus

Valley Civilization some 7000 years ago. Sumerian texts about 5000 years ago also give reference to oral diseases. Hence no wonder that the first dentist of the world was *Hesy-Re* from ancient Egypt. During the early medieval ages i.e. around 1200 AD, the practice of dental extraction was performed by professionals, interestingly enough, by 'Guild of Barbers' in France. The medieval world recognized the importance of dental sciences in form of work of Ambrose Pare, Father of Surgery, in 1575 and Charles Allen when he published the first textbook on dentistry in 1685. The years between 1650 and 1800 saw the initiation and development of various concepts behind what we now think of as dentistry led by French Physician, Pierre Fauchard. He is called "The Father of Modern Dentistry". The efforts of Horace Hayden and Chapin Harris in 1840 led to the establishment of first dental school in the world, the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery and formal modern training program namely Doctorate of Dental Surgery (DDS) degree.

Throughout the course of development of Dental Sciences, the area of the discipline was evolving from simple mechanical dental procedures to encompassing diseases involving also to other tissues inside oral cavity like gums and tongue. Today it seems more reasonable to use the term Oral Science instead of Dental Science because of the ever increasing scope of the field. Now an oral health professional is expected to know and take care of the whole of oral cavity and its associated structures.

The recent expansion of knowledge in modern science in the form of disciplines like biophysics, biochemistry, genetics, and embryology has increased the expectations of common man from oral health professional asking for a holistic and integrated approach towards treatment. The term oral sciences includes not only dental sciences but also beyond. As of today we have unlimited access to information to various facets of disease biology. Similarly, knowledge about modern sciences is necessary for rehabilitation. The issue is taking great importance today as the average life span and proportion of older individuals in our population are increasing. Today, oral health professionals are called for service in diverse fields like forensic to dental oncology, and are working to regenerate lost oral tissues, detect and treat oral defects during embryogenesis through the use of modern molecular biology techniques.

Though oral sciences had illustrious historical background, yet unfortunately, today, the training system in most of the countries in oral health professionals is more mechanical and disease oriented. Medicine has overcome such initial hiccups and has introduced many interdisciplinary subjects like translational medicine, biophysics, medical genetics etc. The Oral Sciences needs to create its own niche and transform according to demands of time. Opportunities are abound for new generation and may be, in future, some of them become Darwin of Dentistry as it is called today.

Divya Mehrotra

Editor in Chief, Professor, Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, King George Medical University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

E-mail address: divyamehrotra@hotmail.com

Available online 7 September 2014

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jobcr.2014.08.008>

2212-4268/Copyright © 2014, Craniofacial Research Foundation.

All rights reserved.