

FDI policy statement on non-communicable diseases

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FDI World Dental Federation

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ORAL HEALTH AND GLOBAL HEALTH

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading disease burden worldwide. In recognition of the importance of NCDs, the United Nations (UN) High-level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases made a ground-breaking Political Declaration in September 2011 stating in particular ‘that renal, oral and eye diseases pose a major health burden for many countries and that these diseases share common risk factors and can benefit from common responses to non-communicable diseases’¹.

The impact of oral diseases on NCDs is considerable, in terms of pain and suffering, impairment of function, reduced quality of life and cost of treatment. In addition, the high level of global inequalities in oral health is unacceptable. Common oral infection/inflammation such as periodontal disease is associated with NCDs, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, certain forms of cancer and respiratory diseases. Additional research is needed to determine the strength of an oral and general health link, and the clinical implications, through collaboration with other health-care professionals.

Common risk factors for NCDs including oral diseases, unhealthy diet such as excessive intake of sugars, tobacco usage and excessive alcohol consumption, are shared and significantly influenced by socio-economic determinants^{2–4}.

FDI considers that the global NCD movement can be enriched through implementing strategies for controlling and preventing oral diseases for optimal oral and general health.

THE ROLE OF FDI IN ADDRESSING NCDS AND ORAL HEALTH

- FDI should advocate for global health improvement initiatives that incorporate oral health strategies into the NCD agenda, in particular within the framework of the UN agencies

- FDI should establish alliances with major stakeholders in the field of NCDs such as other health-care organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector
- Based on the World Health Assembly (WHA) 2007 resolution for promoting oral health and integrated disease prevention, FDI encourages the integration of oral health to NCD programmes⁵
- The Common Risk Factor Approach is a guiding principle for developing evidence-based, population-wide interventions that address social determinants of health to reduce disease burden.

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL DENTAL ASSOCIATIONS (NDAS) IN ADDRESSING NCDS AND ORAL HEALTH

- NDAs should make governments, policy makers and community leaders aware of the great importance of major common risk factors that affect both oral health and other NCDs
- NDAs should build strong alliances with all national stakeholders taking action against NCDs
- NDAs and oral health-care professionals should advocate for the implementation of integrated and well-planned interventions for NCDs within the health sector, in collaboration with the educational and public/private sectors
- NDAs should be proactive in undertaking health-promotion strategies that prevent and control the determinants of NCDs for optimal oral and general health.

REFERENCES

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