

The Liverpool Declaration: Promoting Oral Health in the 21st Century

Participants took note of the Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World and affirmed their commitment to the promotion of health and prevention of oral diseases.

A call for action

The 8th World Congress on Preventive Dentistry (WCPD) took place from 7-10 September 2005 in Liverpool, United Kingdom. The WCPD was organized jointly by the International Association for Dental Research (IADR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the European Association of Dental Public Health (EADPH) and the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry (BASCD). Participants from 43 countries addressed the prevention of oral diseases which are significant burdens on children and adults worldwide. The good news is that oral diseases are preventable and considerable improvements can be made if appropriate public health programmes are established.

The participants emphasized that oral health is an integral part of general health and wellbeing and a basic human right. Participants took note of the World Health Organization's "Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World"¹ (Bangkok, Thailand, 2005) and affirmed their commitment to support the work carried out by national and international health authorities, research institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society for the promotion of health and prevention of oral diseases.

In this Call for Action, the following areas of work for oral health should be strengthened in countries by the year 2020:

1. Countries should ensure that the population has access to clean water, proper sanitation facilities, a healthy diet and good nutrition.
2. Countries should ensure appropriate and affordable fluoride programmes for the prevention of tooth decay.
3. Countries should provide evidence-based programmes for the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the reduction of modifiable risk factors common to oral and general chronic diseases.
4. The school should be used as a platform for promotion of health, quality of life and disease prevention in children and young people, involving families and communities.
5. Countries should ensure access to primary oral health care with emphasis on prevention and health promotion.
6. Countries should strengthen promotion of oral health for the growing numbers of older people, aiming at improving their quality of life.
7. Countries should formulate policies for oral health as an integral part of national health programmes.

8. Countries should support public health research and specifically consider the recommendations of WHO which recommends 10% of a total health promotion programme budget be devoted to programme evaluation.

9. Countries should establish health information systems that evaluate oral health and programme implementation, support the development of the evidence base in health promotion and disease prevention through research and support the international dissemination of research findings.

The participants and Associations support the efforts of the WHO Oral Health Programme which aims at coordinating and supporting inter-country sharing of experiences in health promotion and oral disease prevention.