

Policy Statement

Collaboration between oral health professionals and other health professionals



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FDI World Dental Federation

KEYWORDS:

collaboration
oral healthcare and health and social care professionals
electronic health record
person-focused care

CONTEXT

Integrating oral health into the general health and development agenda is one of FDI Vision 2030's three pillars. By 2030, the goal is that oral and general person-focused healthcare will be integrated, leading to more effective prevention and management of oral diseases and improved general health and well-being.

Oral health professionals, collaborating with other health and social care professionals, have the largely unexploited potential to be important advocates, enablers and mediators for oral health. Given the common risk factors linking non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease with periodontal disease, improving collaboration has the potential to improve overall health and well-being. For oral healthcare to be properly integrated with healthcare in general, it is also essential that all oral health professionals understand the importance of the social determinants of oral health and integrate their activities with other health professionals.

Proactive collaboration between oral health professionals and other health and social care professionals is key to improving person-centered care.

SCOPE

This policy statement highlights the importance of proactive collaboration between oral health and other health and social care professionals to deliver high quality person-centered care.

It does not seek to devise a system to deliver this collaboration nor to cover every oral disease or intervention.

DEFINITIONS

Collaboration: when health and social workers from different professional backgrounds actively contribute together to provide comprehensive services by working with patients, their families, carers and communities to deliver the highest quality of care in different settings.

Person centered care: describes a shift away from a model in which the patient is the passive target of a medical intervention to another model where a more contractual arrangement is made involving the patient as an active part in his or her care and the decision-making process.

PRINCIPLES

Collaboration across health care requires action at the level of individual health professionals and healthcare provider organizations and at higher levels across local and national government.

POLICY

- FDI promotes the importance of interprofessional collaboration and person-centered care to improve patients' oral and general health;
- FDI supports educating oral health professionals and health and social care professionals recurrently about the mutual benefits of collaboration and person-centered care, including the management of common risk factors, understanding manifestations of oral and systemic disease and the impact of any treatment provided;
- FDI encourages patient participation, where appropriate, in the collaboration between oral health and other health professionals;
- FDI highlights the role which health professionals and other organizations can play in supporting oral health and other health professionals to collaborate. This would be greatly facilitated by providing systems for timely and secure interactions between professionals and the use of joint or common health records accessible between services, especially when held electronically;

- FDI recommends inclusion of the principle of collaboration at the highest possible level of policy and service design.

DISCLAIMER

The information in this Policy Statement was based on the best scientific evidence available at the time. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities and socioeconomic constraints.

FURTHER READING

1. [Glick M, Williams DM, Ben Yahya I, et al. Vision 2030: Delivering Optimal Oral Health for All. Geneva: FDI World Dental Federation; 2021.](#)
2. Resolution EB148.R1. Oral Health. In: 148th session of the WHO Executive Board, Geneva, 18-26 January 2021. Resolutions and decisions, and annexes. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2021 (EB148/2021/REC/1), Resolution EB146.R1: 1-5.
3. [Leplege A, Gzil F, Cammellin M, Lefevre C, Pachoud B, Ville I. Person-centredness: conceptual and historical perspectives. Disabil Rehabil 2007;29:1555–65.](#)