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Maintenance of a Proper Dental Hygiene

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Editorial

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The maintenance of a proper dental hygiene is widely accepted in the scientific community as relevant for good oral and general health.

The World Health Organization gives relevance to this topic and presents data from countries all over the world. Same happens with the FDI–World Dental Federation that recently (April, 2015) published a second edition of a report on the Inter-Professional Education and Collaborative Practice.

The dental team is composed by different professions with different roles but one single objective: patients' health and well-being, working for the individual in the clinical practice but also for the community with groups of all ages. To achieve this objective it is essential to ensure a good communication with our patients, and to do so the health literacy abilities of an individual should be addressed.

Literacy skills are related to health outcomes and are fundamental to empower individuals and develop their potential to control daily events and fully participate in society.

It is accepted that the concept of health literacy refers to the ability of an individual to obtain, interpret and understand basic information on health and services in a way that promotes health [1]. Health literacy is also considered an array of individual competences that can be organized in four domains. These domains are:

- (i) cultural and conceptual knowledge,
- (ii) ability to listen and speak,
- (iii) ability to write and read, and
- (iv) numeracy [2].

And it is mainly dependent on basic literacy levels, with its development linked to education, transmission and translation of health information and, also, related to educative policies and reduction of structural barriers to health.

These domains should be considered by the dental team when approaching an individual, not only to communicate the health problem but also when providing instructions of care and prescription of drugs. Recent data shows that every 8 minutes there is an error in child medication in the US [3], also about 70% of parent make mistakes when giving medications to their children [4].

In order to provide proper information to patients, the dental team should discuss among themselves the best way to communicate with patients, taking in consideration the domains above mentioned. The lack of communication among the health care team may result in poor health of the patients [5].

The scientific ability must be allied with the ability to transmit information for health promotion and education to individual and community and also with the ability to show our peers the work developed by the team and the advances reached, not only in techniques but also in the social and educational aspects of disease.

The production of visual aids for information on dental health, like pamphlets or recommendation notes of care; are an easy and inexpensive way to reach patients and deliver information. Language should be simple and the use of images should help to understand the issue.

An educated patient is an aware individual to disease prevention. This individual will take care of his own health and will also alert others on what to do to stay healthy. This is a major achievement that dental teams should look for, to educate patients in health promotion and prevention of diseases.

Dental professional all over the world have the necessary competencies to become health educators and the work of the dental team must be recognized as of major importance for the promotion of oral health and, also, of general health.

It is essential that dental professionals present their work and research to the scientific community; this is the only way that dental professionals can be acknowledged as valuable members of the general health care professionals.

A scientific journal of excellence depends on its editorial board and also on the contribution of individuals committed to scientific and academic knowledge, who present their research, case studies or subject reviews. The publication of papers not only raise awareness of the dental community and general health actors for the development of the dental science but it also shows the contribution to the knowledge on dental and general health by dental professionals, promoting the dental team and building values to the excellent work done by this group of health professionals.

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