

The future of oral care and dentistry in Europe

By CED President Dr. Marco Landi

When it comes to the outlook on oral health, I like to start with the positive news first: in the last decades, we have witnessed an immense progress in the prevention of caries in children as well as a major improvement in the prevalence of caries in children and young adults in Europe, which is a great achievement by any means.

However, damaged, missing or filled teeth are still the norm in Europe and oral diseases remain amongst the most prevalent health burdens. Nearly half of the world's population is suffering from untreated dental caries, severe chronic periodontitis, and missing teeth. The WHO reports that \$298 billion has been spent on direct caries-related costs, and 5%-10% of healthcare budgets in industrialised countries are spent on dental caries treatment. In addition to the financial cost of treating caries, the secondary burden on individuals and economies, resulting from missed educational, social and employment opportunities, is immense.

Unfortunately, it seems that most politicians still do not understand that oral health is an essential part of general health and has an effect not only on quality of life, but also on sustainability of health systems and more broadly on national economy. That is why CED is constantly emphasising that neglecting oral health issues has serious health, societal and economic consequences and that resolving these concerns must become a top priority for EU health policy.

CED's outlook for 2020

The CED's guiding principle for the future of European dentistry is that everybody should have access to high-quality oral healthcare, which must be delivered by well-trained, professional and fully qualified dentists, using the latest and most suitable technologies in an evidence-based approach.

Taking into account current challenges facing oral health across Europe (antimicrobial resistance, aging population, health disparities, corporatisation of dentistry, digitalisation of healthcare etc.), the CED will continue to promote high standards in oral healthcare and dentistry with professional practice focused on patient safety. To achieve this, the CED seeks to ensure that the dental profession is properly regulated and that the new challenges can be met by dental teams of today. This means that in the year 2020, the CED will continue to focus on professional education and regulation, health promotion and disease prevention, patient safety and environmental sustainability of dentistry, as well as on impact of e-Health and artificial intelligence on dentistry: only by doing so will we be able to ensure that our population's oral health needs are adequately met, both now and in the future.

The CED, supported by our members from 33 national dental associations, stands ready to seize the opportunities and face the challenges that the future holds for dentistry and oral health in Europe. I am very grateful for our members' support throughout the years and I look forward to another successful year ahead!