FDI schedules two sessions of its landmark World Oral Health Forum

Meetings to focus on sugar reduction and Universal Health Coverage

FDI has introduced its innovative landmark World Oral Health Forum for the first time at the 2012 Annual World Dental Congress in Hong Kong. Since then, the objective has been to guarantee top-level panellists and subjects at the cutting edge of public policy in the field of oral health and related issues. This year is no exception, with two sessions scheduled for the upcoming AWDC in Bangkok.

Session 1 will focus on sugar as a significant risk factor for dental caries and other NCDs in the light of the recently-published World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on Sugar intake for Adults and Children. A reduction in daily intake of free sugars to less than 10% of their total energy intake. It also advises that a further reduction to below 5% or roughly 25 grams (six teaspoons) per day would provide additional health benefits.

The session will be moderated by Dr HS Selikowatz, Vice Chair of the FDI Science Committee, with panellists Dr Chizuru Nishida, Coordinator, Nutrition Policy and Scientific Advice Unit, Department of Nutrition for Health and Development, WHO; Prof. Paula Moynihan, Professor of Nutrition and Oral Health and Director of the Centre for Oral Health Research at Newcastle University UK and Director of its WHO Collaborating Centre for Nutrition and Oral Health, Dr Rob Beaglehole, Principal Dental Officer and Senior Dentist for the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board (NMDHB) in New Zealand, member of the NZDA political lobby group and is Tobacco Control Advisor to the NZDA; and Ms Modi Mwatsama (UK) a Registered Nutritionist and Director for Global Health at the UK Health Forum where she leads on NCDs and global health policy.

Session 2 of the World Oral Health Forum 2015 is entitled ‘Universal Health Coverage (UHC) towards optimal oral health’. It will highlight efforts made by emerging economies and low and middle income countries to achieve UHC and a roadmap which could be used to integrate oral health into UHC within the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

The session is moderated by Prof. Michael Glick, Professor, Oral Medicine and Dean, School of Dental Medicine, University of New York at Buffalo, USA, who will address the Forum on What do we mean by optimal oral health? Panellists include Professor David Williams, Professor of Global Oral Health, Bart’s and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, London, UK, who will speak on UHC and how oral health fits into it; and Dr Manu R. Mathur, Research Scientist and Adjunct Assistant Professor at Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), New Delhi, India, whose focus will be UHC in Emerging Economies: Roadmap to Achieve Optimal Oral Health.

Asia’s first dental museum opens in Bangkok

With the newly opened Sirindhorn Dental Museum, the Faculty of Dentistry at Mahidol University in Bangkok has introduced the first dental museum of its kind in Asia. By highlighting the history of dentistry and oral hygiene across Asia through fun and interactive exhibits, the museum hopes to raise awareness in the country about the importance of proper oral care.

The 620 square metres museum, which is sponsored by the royal family, features five main exhibits, each aimed at improving understanding of the importance of good dental health.

“We want to ensure that Thais will have a healthy smile in our ‘Land of Smiles’ for as long as possible,” Dr Phira Sithiamnuai, assistant professor and Deputy Dean for Collaboration and Networking at the faculty, told the Bangkok Post. “Our goal for the museum is to encourage Thai children to understand the importance of oral health in an entertaining way. We hope that learning with fun will inspire people to make healthy choices about their oral health.”

A highlight for children is the giant model of a mouth. Assisted by the staff, visitors are encouraged to practise their toothbrushing skills on the huge teeth with equally giant toothbrushes. Other interactive items are a 3-D human model that shows how oral health can affect the overall well-being, as well as several multimedia displays on dental science.

Furthermore, the exhibition takes a closer look at the history of dentistry throughout China, India and Thailand, including collections of dental materials and tools, as well as information on dental statistics, and even a prehistoric human skeleton that features traces of unnaturally modified teeth.

Many Thais, especially people in remote areas, lack access to basic oral health care. As reported online by the Bangkok Post, Sithiamnuai remarked that the dentist per capita ratio in the capital is 14 times higher than in the north-east of the country, for example.

According to figures from the Bureau of Dental Health, Thailand, FDI has just 11,607 dentists. This translates to a dentist-population ratio of approximately 1:5,533, compared with an average of 1:2,000 in most developed countries.

The Sirindhorn Dental Museum is located at the Siriraj Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn 50th Anniversary Building at the university’s Phaya-Thai campus and is free of admission.