WHO and dentistry: moving on from misinformation

By Jeremy Booth, Dental Tribune International

GENEVA, Switzerland: The World Health Organization (WHO) handling of the global pandemic has brought more criticism than praise, and dentists are among those who have denounced public health guidance from the UN agency. According to dental associations contacted by Dental Tribune International (DTI), WHO has been the subject of unbalanced media coverage relating to its guidance on dental practice. Much of the criticism that has been directed at WHO during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has been in reaction to guidance about practices that are unfamiliar to the citizens of many countries, such as the wearing of masks in public and the need to reduce social contact. Dental professionals around the world reacted defensively when the agency called for the delay of routine dental care in interim guidance issued on 5 August, with many fearing that further postponement of elective care would damage oral health and compound the damage that had already been done to their businesses during the first wave of the virus. Some dentists felt that it was an attack on the effectiveness of infection prevention measures within dentistry.

Florida dentist Dr Greg Prior told ABC Action News in late August that the timing of the WHO recommendation had made no sense, as dentists in the state had been allowed to resume the provision of oral care in April. Since emergency measures were put in place in the state in March, Prior has implemented even greater infection control measures at his dental practice, including the installation of air purifiers and air filters. “Dentistry is so important for people’s overall health,” Prior told the news agency. “It seems untimely that it would be postponed. This is an international recommendation, especially since we’re all coming back to work and we’re all putting in the protocols.” The American Dental Association (ADA) had said in mid-August that it “respectfully yet strongly disagrees” with the WHO guidance. A long list of news agencies reported on the WHO recommendation, and it was also covered by publishers from the dental industry press, including DTI. In an email to dental associations on 15 August, Dr Beat Verriere, a WHO dental officer, expressed concerns about the way that the guidance had been interpreted by the media. “Unfortunately, a number of media headlines intentionally or not—when they were referring to the WHO guidance, did not mention that the recommendation to delay routine oral healthcare is only suggested in an intense uncontrolled community transmission scenario,” Verriere wrote. He asked dental leaders to be aware of incomplete reporting, and the fact that it could heighten the concerns that many patients already had with regard to visiting their dental practice during the pandemic.

According to the British Dental Association (BDA), incomplete reporting on the WHO guidance by the media had caused confusion about the agency’s recommendations in the area of oral healthcare. A BDA spokesperson told DTI: “Contrary to media reports, the guidance did not say categorically that all non-urgent treatments should be postponed but suggested that some treatments be delayed until there has been a sufficient reduction in SARS-CoV-2 community transmission rates. It also stated that ‘adequate ventilation in oral healthcare facilities reduces the risk of transmission in closed settings’. This principle has been taken up by the profession in order to reduce fallow time and to make it possible to see more patients.” The spokesperson added that WHO “could not necessarily provide a one-size-fits-all solution, and it was considered inappropriate to apply this advice in the UK’s current context, where dentists already have extremely high levels of infection prevention and control in place.”

The Bundeszahnärztekammer (BZÄK) (German dental association) told DTI that it also felt that media reporting had led to the interim guidance from WHO being misunderstood. “The WHO recommendation is essentially the same as the BZÄK recommendations. Only a postponement of dental visits in an uncontrolled transmission scenario is recommended, and otherwise the official health policy recommendations at national, regional or local level should be followed,” the association said.

Adoption of the areas that have been proven and to aid the integration of new technologies that benefit dental professionals in all dental disciplines. The scientific programme included topics on dental sleep medicine, bone regeneration and soft tissue management, laser dentistry, prevention and oral hygiene, surgical regenerative, periodontal defects, aesthetic and digital smile design, occlusion, material selection for high performance rehabilitation and dental facial cosmetic surgical procedures related to grafts, implants as well as non-surgical periodontal and endodontic treatments.

Dental facial cosmetic treatments remain one of the most popular treatments in the middle east region and the conference surpassed expectations through its 40+ lecture presentations.

Total of 25 multi-disciplinary hands-on training courses In addition to the two conferences and two sub-specialty seminars, over 25 multidisciplinary hybrid hands-on training courses took place, catering to dental professionals, and showcasing the latest trends in restorative, aesthetic, and digital dentistry, as well as implantology, facial aesthetics, orthodontics, endodontics, dental technologies, dental hygiene, and product innovations. The courses were organized through online livestreaming as well as face to face interaction at the CAPP Training Institute in Dubai, UAE.

Poster presentations The annual poster presentations were hosted virtually as part of the two conferences. The competition was open to all dental students, interns, graduates students, general dentists, or dental specialists who had submitted their entries. Each participant presented during the event and was reviewed by the scientific committee live online. CAPP and the scientific committee had the pleasure to congratulate the winners.

• 1st Place - Dr Eman Maged Fouad & Dr Aya Mohamed Efoey, Egypt who presented “Does Dynamic Navigation Represent a New Era in Digital Dentistry.”

• 2nd Place - Dr Amruth Ganesh, India, who presented “Visia – The Present and Future of Periodontal Plastic Surgery: A Case Report.”

• 3rd Place - Dr Les Kalam, Canada, who presented “In Vitro Assessment of a Novel Additive Manufactured Ti-Titanium Implant Abutment.”

All participating delegates received a certificate of attendance. The awards were sponsored by Philips Sonicare, Shofu and Castle General Trading.

Thank you to all sponsors, media, and scientific partners CAPP would like to thank all sponsors, media publishers, and scientific partners for supporting the CAPP November Dental Livestream containing dental educational programmes. The sponsors included Dentalpro Siromon, Oral-3D, Straumann Group Digital Solutions, Vocol Vivadent, Henry Schein Connect Dental, NSK, 3D Middle East, 3D Systems, Carammed Dental, NextDent by 3D Systems, Audito, Shofu, Scispor International LLC, BORGA, GIK, Coltene, SDR, Fon dado, Vital Alliance Co. Ltd, ME Dent, 3Shape, ORMCO, Ultradent, Cusaden, Curaprox, Philips Sonicare, VITA, GC, Zirkonzahn, Hu-Friedy, EMS, Southern Implants, Castle General Trading, Acteon, FGH, ClearSmile Aligner, Bausch, Dentalix, Medit, Magtec, and Formlabs Dental.

CAPP November Dental Livestream was supported by the following scientific partners; Saudi Dental Society, Singapore Dental Association, Kuwait Dental Association, Dental Courses, International group for Oral Rehabilitation, Lebanese Dental Association, The Lebanese Orthodontic Society, Oman Dental Society, Iraqi Dental Association, Saudi Orthodontic Society (Digital Orthodontics Scientific Partner), Association of Orthodontists (Singapore), AALZ Aachen Dental Laser Center, British Academy of Restorative Dentistry (BARD), British Academy of Dental Implantology (BADI), Tipton Training, International College of Dentists, Emirates Dental Hygienist Club, FDC Academy, Q & M Dental Group and Association for Oral Health Therapists Singapore.

CAPP Dental ConfExpo 2021 to take place in November 2021 CAPP will be organising the CAPP Dental ConfExpo on 17-19 November 2021 in Dubai, UAE. During these three days, the 16th CAD/CAM Digital Dentistry and 17th Dental Facial Cosmetic International Conferences will take place. In collaboration with World Expo 2020. The World Expo 2020 is a global event taking place on 8-31 October 2021. It will be the most important event as it promotes the vision of the planet as well as sustainability, mobility, and opportunity. Expo 2020 Dubai will be a celebration of the UAE Vision 2021.