Interview: World Oral Health Day with FDI President Dr Kathryn Kell

Why is oral health an important topic beyond the teeth and mouth of an individual?

Oral health is much more than a beautiful smile – it is an essential part of our well-being. The mouth is a kind of ‘mirror’ to the body and reflects the status of our overall health. A look into our mouths can reveal nutritional deficiencies, signs of serious diseases, and the effects of unhealthy habits like tobacco or alcohol use. World Oral Health Day encourages all of us to protect our mouths and bodies by adopting good hygiene habits, eating a healthy diet that is low in sugar and high in fruits and vegetables, quitting tobacco use and avoiding harmful alcohol consumption.

What results did World Oral Health Day achieve over the past few years?

We are impressed by the increasing global reach of World Oral Health Day. In 2018, 96,129 participants in 544 events around the world celebrated on 20 March. 190 countries engaged in events and activities. Here’s a snapshot of the diversity of World Oral Health Day activities around the world: children’s education programmes, lectures, workshops, rallies, free dental check-ups, brush-a-thons, media outreach, social media promotion and more. The response in the media, including on social media, was staggering: in 2018, our campaign reached close to 800 million people.

What is your anticipation for World Oral Health Day in 2019?

This year, World Oral Health Day is all about action on oral health at every level. The campaign will promote good oral hygiene habits and the importance of adopting a healthy diet and lifestyle. It will also highlight the link between oral diseases and other noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and some cancers. The 2019 campaign theme, “Say Ahh. Act on Mouth Health” is filled with oral health messages and tips for good oral care that children and adults can take home and integrate into their daily self-care routines and share with their families and friends.

Why are partnerships with companies like Philips important to FDI and how do such organizations support World Oral Health Day?

As you know, the dental profession and the dental industry are essential partners in delivering oral health to populations around the world. Bridging the gap between the two is even more important today, as new materials and technologies are developed to accommodate the latest treatment philosophies. As leaders in the corporate world, companies like Philips have access to an international community of diverse stakeholders; by working together, we can promote oral health on a truly global scale. Since 2016, Philips Sonicare has played an integral role in ensuring the success of World Oral Health Day through global and local activations. In the UAE, Philips collaborated with several stakeholders such as Dubai Health Authority, universities and schools to raise awareness on oral hygiene. By continuing to unite our efforts, we can help make oral diseases a priority health issue and lead the world to optimal oral health.
Interview:
“You are not healthy without good oral health”

By Dental Tribune MEA/CAPPmea

Can you please give us a short introduction of yourself and the organisation?
I am Kathryn Kell and I am the President of FDI World Dental Federation. We are based in Geneva, Switzerland and in the organisation, we represent over a million dentists worldwide. We have around 200 members and we have about 110 members that are membership organisations. For example, I am a member of the American Dental Association — they are a member of FDI. The United Arab Emirates is a member of FDI. Those are the membership organisations, but then, in addition, we have other international organisations as affiliate and supporting members that are also very involved with us.

For instance, the International Association of Dental Research, the American Dental Education Association and several honorary member organisations, such as the International College of Dentists, the Academy of Dentistry International and the Pierre Fauchard Academy are some of our other members. We really have a great international group of people in our organisation.

I have been involved with FDI myself for many years. At one stage, I was the Chair of the Congress and Education Committee, which was why I was previously in Dubai at the last couple of meetings. So I am rather familiar with this meeting area and really great to be back here again and see the changes.

Can you tell us a little bit about how you are partnering with the industry? You mentioned it now, you are also a partner. Previously — I remember last year — we also partnered with other industry players. How important is that for you and what is the scale that you use to evaluate who should be the partner and how to grow the partnership?
I say “partners” we really are partners, because without our partners we would not be able to do anything, really. As a dentist myself, in my office, if I do not have equipment and if I do not have the right materials, I am not going to be able to practice. It is the same thing with FDI if we do not have a commitment to each other. And that is what we look for, really strong programmes where we can work together. At 3M, we had “Smile beyond the World” and I had a really great, successful project in China last year. So, now we are looking forward to doing more.

And you are also doing that in India and Brazil right?
Yes, that was also in the past project.

What about here in the Middle East?
In the Middle East, we actually need to start developing some programmes. We have a Middle East Education Committee and we have a person who is based in Lebanon actually. Wajid Burned, who puts on educational programmes around the Middle East and North Africa.

Could you share a little bit about the vision you have, 2020? What is that all about?
Vision 2020 is our advocacy programme. Again, we have advocacy for our members, but we also advocate for oral health around the world and we do this by working with the World Health Organisation and other United Nations agencies. I recently did a presentation in CIOSP in São Paulo, Brazil a few days ago on the Minamata convention. Basically, people are looking at what other materials we are going to be using in the future. We know the future are composites, glass ionomers and some things we are looking for you to still develop. We are very excited about some of the new things that we know you are going to be coming out with in the next few years, too.

We went to the 3M headquarters in the Minneapolis St Paul area and we talked to their research team about some of the things that they can do to help develop materials that can be used in countries where even their water supply is limited — you cannot really use the water — they do not have air, they do not have the tools required to do effective glass ionomers in composites. I think if we all work together and look at how we can develop new materials that will really work in some of these countries, that would help us in the long run.

And for the region now, one of the main goals, especially for the FDI and the Dubai Health Authority, is to get rid of caries. Caries prevention is a big goal. How do you see FDI working with those kinds of entities? Have you already begun doing some activities with them through world oral health care? World oral health is one of the things we do at Prevention, but I cannot stress enough how prevention is the key, because if we do not have caries and if we do not have periodontal disease to deal with, then we are in. Then we do not have oral cancer and the things that go along with oral cancer, such as tobacco and alcohol consumption. Then you know you are going to prevent all these other problems from happening. I think, if anything, FDI stresses prevention.

And this year, in March, can we expect anything special here for World Oral Health Day? I am actually going to be back in Cairo on March 20th to celebrate World Oral Health Day. I will be there, and we are looking forward to having a big celebration in Cairo. The Egyptian Dental Association and the Egyptian Dental Senate are working hard to put something exciting together for us.

Along with Vision 2020, we have a new definition of “oral health”, but we have spoken about that before. Now, we are in our next stage: we are going to look at measurement tools, we are going to do surveys and the surveys are going to be global surveys, so that we can actually see what type of dental diseases are out there and which countries have more issues with caries, for example. Whereas other countries may have more issues with periodontal disease. This way we can actually focus on where we want to go with our vision. And then, eventually, we will develop projects that will be the next step.

How can companies or individuals who are not directly involved in the World Oral Health Day participate? How is that something that we can begin?
We really hope that everyone — all companies in our industry — would like to join us and be a part of this individual or corporate projects. Companies can help celebrate with some of their dental organisations. So, there is a way to get involved.

Is there anything else you would like to share with our listeners — the readers of the Middle East dental community?
Our vision is to lead the world to optimal oral health and that is what we want to do. It would be a big thing if the people in the Middle East can work with their governments to put together good programmes that would benefit the public.
We really want to bring oral health into all of healthcare, all of health-care policies and anything you can do to bring oral health care into the health arena, in policies, in your governments. This can be very helpful. “You are not healthy without good oral health” — that is another message we want to convey.
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By E.M.S.

One of the true standout dental products launched at the biennial International Dental Show in Germany in 2017 is the EMS AIRFLOW Prophylaxis Master air polishing system. The EMS PERIOFLOW nozzle, which combines the advantages of a supragingival and subgingival powder in one, is the EMS AIRFLOW PLUS powder. The EMS AIRFLOW Prophylaxis Master has been clinically proven as highly effective time and again at removing biofilm without damage to implant or tissue.

An unexpected benefit for EMS of the micro-sized particles of AIRFLOW PLUS means that only an EMS air polisher unit can dispense the powder. Trying to use AIRFLOW PLUS with a non-EMS air polisher is nothing short of problematic, resulting, for instance, in over-dispensing of powder and clogging. Periodontists and hygienists using the air polishing system have likened it to anyone that had a PC and thought it was the same as a Mac. Lastly, what is a powder engineer and what led you to this role at EMS? We come in contact with powders on a regular basis, never the wiser. Upon closer inspection, we will realise that powders are very complex and its behavior is neither like a solid nor a liquid (despite it, in fact, being a solid). As a result, making a powder is actually complex. A specific university tract does not exist for powder engineers; one must pursue a combined educational plan consisting of chemical and material engineering. I received my Bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering; I then pursued a Master’s degree and finally attained my PhD from a material science department which had a laboratory working exclusively with powders. Whilst conducting my doctoral studies, I had the opportunity to complete a lot of high-end research on powders. This placed me in the perfect position to one day work at EMS: here we have to master the powder from the production to the mouth of the patient!

Marcel, firstly what is a powder engineer and what led you to this role at EMS?

We left no stone unturned. Guided professionals on how to properly perform prophylaxis using our powders and devices.

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2. Disclose biofilm with a disclosing agent as it is the only guaranteed way to see existing biofilm.
3. Motivate patients by showing them their dental biofilm.
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5. PERIOFLOW powder sizes 4-9mm, 6mm, PIERIOFLOW powder sizes 9-3mm, 7mm.
6. Check to ensure all biofilm is removed and accurately diagnose caries.
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