Virtual ADHA

Annual meeting will take place online from June 26 to 28

By Dental Tribune Staff

The annual American Dental Hygienists’ Association conference — which is billed as “The largest, most comprehensive and cost-effective event for dental hygienists in the nation” — is going virtual this year.

The meeting, originally scheduled to take place in New Orleans, will run from Friday, June 26 to Sunday, June 28.

“Due to the enduring impact of COVID-19, ADHA has made the very difficult decision to cancel our in-person annual conference,” the organization said in a post to its Facebook page on April 25. “We were really looking forward to seeing you in New Orleans; however, the health and safety of our community must come first. So, we’re going virtual! Although we can’t be together in person, we can unite from the comfort of home for the first-ever ADHA Virtual Conference.”

Up to 21 C.E. credits will be available during the weekend, and topics include oral cancer assessment, HPV, dental sealants, varnish solutions, mobile dentistry, orofacial myofunctional therapy, implant therapy and depression in staff and patients, among others.

Of particular interest will be “A Conversation with the ADHA Task Force on Return to Work” at 2:45 p.m. Central Time on Saturday as well as a “COVID-19: Your Questions Answered” roundtable at 4 p.m. Central Time on Saturday.

For more information, for a complete schedule and to register for the event, head to www.adha2020.org.

Attendees head into the 2019 ADHA annual meeting in Louisville, Ky. This year, the ADHA meeting is going virtual. Photo/Dental Tribune file photo

Citizen science: Flossing and dental visits correlate to healthier mouths

Most people know that good oral hygiene — brushing, flossing and regular dental visits — is linked to good health. Colorado State University microbiome researchers offer fresh evidence to support that conventional wisdom by taking a close look at invisible communities of microbes that live in every mouth.

The oral microbiome — the sum total of microorganisms, including bacteria and fungi, that occupy the human mouth — was the subject of a crowdsourced, citizen science-driven study by Jessica Metcalf’s research lab at CSU and Nicole Garneau’s research team at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. Published in Scientific Reports, the study found, among other things, a correlation between people who did not visit the dentist regularly and increased presence of a pathogen that causes periodontal disease.

For the experiments, carried out by Garneau’s community science team in the Genetics of Taste Lab at the museum, a wide cross-section of museum visitors submitted to a cheek swab and answered simple questions about their demographics, lifestyles and health habits. Microbial DNA sequencing data analyzed by Metcalf’s group revealed, broadly, that oral health habits affect the communities of bacteria in the mouth. The study underscored the need to think about oral health as strongly linked to the health of the entire body.

Cheek swabs
Back in 2015, paper-co-author Garneau — who earned her Ph.D from CSU — and her team trained volunteer citizen scientists to use large swabs to collect cheek cells from museum visitors — a naturally diverse population — who consented to the study. These trained citizen scientists helped collect swabs from 366 individuals — 181 adults and 185 youth aged 8 to 17.

The original impetus was to determine whether and to what extent the oral microbiome contributes to how people taste sweet things. In collecting this data, which was also reported in the paper, the researchers noted more significant data points around oral health habits.

Flossing and regular dental care
The study grouped people who flossed or didn’t floss (almost everyone said they brushed, so that wasn’t a useful data point). Participants who flossed were found to have lower microbial diversity in their mouths than non-flossers. This is most likely because of the physical removal of bacteria that could be causing inflammation or disease.

Adults who had gone to a dentist in the last three months had lower overall microbial diversity in their mouths than those who hadn’t gone in 12 months or longer and had less of the periodontal disease-causing oral pathogen, Treponema. This, again, was probably because of dental cleaning removing rarer bacterial taxa in the mouth. Youth tended to have had a dental visit more recently than adults.

Youth microbiomes differed among males and females and by weight. Children considered obese according to their body mass indices had distinct microbiomes as compared to non-obese children. The obese children also tended to have higher levels of Treponema, revealing a possible link between childhood obesity and periodontal disease.

Results also saw that people who lived in the same household shared similar oral microbiomes.

The study was made possible by a Science Education Partnership Award from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institutes of Health (Award #R25OD021909).

(Source: Colorado State University)
Barrier protection critical with gloves

While caring for their patients, dental and health care professionals are constantly exposed to bodily fluids that may carry viruses and other infectious agents. It is critical the gloves these professionals use provide the best possible barrier protection, especially today.

Many types of gloves are available, but it is important to know that not all gloves have the same barrier capability, depending on the type of material used. For example, natural rubber latex gloves have long been acknowledged for their very effective barrier properties, while non-latex gloves, such as vinyl (polyvinyl chloride), have inferior barrier capability as shown by numerous studies.

**Quality, safety top priorities**

Other synthetic gloves, such as nitrile and polyprene, perform much better than vinyl but are more costly, especially polyprene gloves. Using gloves with inferior capability could expose both the patient and user to harmful infections. Malaysia is the world’s largest medical gloves exporter (latex and nitrile). Both quality and users’ safety are of top priority to the nation’s glove industry. To this end, a quality certification program (the Standard Malaysian Glove, or the SMG) has currently been formulated for latex examination gloves.

**Stringent technical specifications**

All SMG-certified gloves must comply with stringent technical specifications to ensure the gloves are high in barrier effectiveness, low in protein and low in allergy risks, in addition to having excellent comfort, fit and durability — qualities that manufacturers of many synthetic gloves are trying to achieve.

Latex gloves are green products, derived from a natural and sustainable resource, and are environmentally friendly. (You can learn more by visiting www.smgonline.biz or www.latexgloves.info).

The use of low-protein, powder-free gloves has been demonstrated by many independent hospital studies to markedly reduce the incidence of latex sensitization and allergic reactions in workplaces.

More important, latex-allergic individuals donning non-latex gloves can now work alongside their coworkers wearing the improved low-protein gloves without any heightened allergy concern. However, for latex-allergic individuals, it is still important they use appropriate non-latex gloves, such as quality nitrile and polyprene gloves, which provide them with effective barrier protection.

**Extensive array of brand, prices**

Selecting the right gloves should be an educated consideration to enhance safety for both patients and users. For decades, gloves made in Malaysia have been synonymous with quality and excellence, and they are widely available in an extensive array of brands, features and prices. Dental gloves can be sourced either factory direct (www.mrepc.com/marketplace) or from established dental products distributors in the United States and Canada.

(Source: MREPC)
When it comes to **Protection Quality** makes the Difference

Stringent infection prevention and control plays a critical role in dental care.

The use of quality dental gloves is indispensable in protecting both dental care providers and their patients since many dental procedures involve saliva, blood, mucous and other body fluid which are potentially infectious.

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