Dentistry is still largely a profession focused on treatment rather than prevention of oral diseases like caries or periodontal disease. A preventive approach in dentistry is needed more than ever, according to FDI Continuing Education programme director for the Asia-Pacific region and FDI AWDC presenter Dr William Cheung.

Dental Tribune Online sat down with him on Tuesday morning to discuss the philosophy briefly, and its benefits for both the patient and dentist.

Dental Tribune Online: Dr Cheung, could you please summarise the key aspects of the preventive philosophy for us and why it is important?

Dr William Cheung: I think in the mind of most dental practitioners, prevention means primarily brushing, flossing and regular cleaning. There is no question that these measures are important but there is a lot more to this, like all the developments in the area of fluoride, for example. Many dentists are not aware of that. There is also caries management by risk assessment, where we sit down with the patient and go through a certain process step by step. With the outcome of this, we can identify certain areas that need special attention. Then we formulate a protocol for this particular patient for managing his or her risk, or minimising it. This is not necessary for every single patient but if we expect the patient to be highly susceptible to caries then we would go through that exercise and perform a risk assessment.

Such a model clearly benefits the patient. What is in it for the dentist? Patients sense that you have a preventive approach at your practice and actually notice that you are going through all these exercises for them. This creates a positive image for the practice.

As dentists, we gain greater satisfaction because we can see the result of introducing this type of approach to patients that will subsequently be of benefit to them. By having patients come in regularly, you can identify something and can offer choices rather than expecting patients to come in only once they have a problem. When you start to build this kind of positive image and patients are happy, they are going to refer patients to you. Referred patients are the best patients in my opinion.

Considering all the prevention-focused initiatives that organisations like the FDI are running, where do we stand with the preventive model? Unfortunately, at a congress like the FDI AWDC here in Istanbul, most dentists want primarily to attend presentations in fields like cosmetic dentistry and implants. Those are the major topics that they are interested in, and I do not blame them because implants can generate a lot of revenue. As dental professionals, however, I think we owe it to our patients to adopt a preventive philosophy. If we do the right thing, it can be rewarding as well financially. So, if you ask me when we are going to reverse this trend, I do not have an answer for you but as a dental association it is our responsibility to teach prevention and ensure that dentists understand what that means.

Thank you very much for the interview.

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**Interview: ‘Referred patients are the best patients’**

**AWDC attendees receive invitation to India**

**ISTANBUL, Turkey:** With Indian Dental Association President Dr Pramod Gurav addressing friends, long-term partners and guests of the FDI World Dental Federation today at the Istanbul Congress Center during an official lunch, the eyes of the international dental community are slowly turning away from Istanbul to New Delhi, where the next Annual World Dental Congress will be held next year from 11 to 14 September at the India Expo Centre in Greater Noida.

It will be the second congress held by the organisation in the Asian country after the one in 2004. Gurav said that his country has become a land of opportunity for dentistry, with oral health care awareness and access to oral health care constantly increasing. He remarked that the congress, which will be held under the theme “A billion smiles welcome the world of dentistry”, is in line with its and the government of India’s ambitious goal to achieve optimum oral health for all.

“We are delighted that the FDI has once again chosen India for its landmark event—it is a wise choice,” Gurav said.

The decision to host the next congress in India was made back in May. Exactly ten years after the congress took place in New Delhi, the event will be hosted by the FDI in collaboration with the Indian Dental Association. The association currently has over 50,000 members and operates through 28 state branches, more than 350 local branches and 1 defence branch. It aims to achieve optimal oral health for every Indian by 2020.

India currently boasts the largest dental workforce in the world. In addition, an estimated 20,000 dental students graduate from the country’s 301 dental schools every year. The market there, worth around US$50 million according to industry experts, offers huge growth opportunities for dental manufacturers, especially for producers of dental implants and prostheses.

Besides an impressive scientific programme, the congress in New Delhi will feature early breakfast meetings and Meet the Experts sessions aimed at bringing together the experts in a specific subject and a small group of dentists in an interactive setting, the Indian Dental Association said. Hands-on courses supplementing the lectures will provide a more intimate and constructive learning environment designed to develop clinical skills and practices relevant to modern dental practice and today’s cutting-edge dentistry.

The Year in Review meetings, introduced at the centenary congress in Hong Kong last year will provide additional focused learning opportunities. Interactive discussions on practical cases will deal with specific cases discussed directly with prominent speakers.

As reported by The New York Times online, the annual number of hospitalisations increased by more than 40 percent from 5,757 in 2000 to 8,141 in 2008.

According to the scientists, 89 % of all the hospitalisations occurred on an emergency basis. The mean length of stay was 2.96 days. The average age of patients admitted for reasons related to a dental abscess was 37. More than 18 percent of the patients had no insurance. In addition, the numbers revealed that 66 patients died in hospitals because of such oral infections.

The study, titled “Outcomes of Hospitalizations Attributed to Periapical Abscess from 2000 to 2008: A Longitudinal Trend Analysis,” was published in the September issue of the Journal of Endodontics.