

PREFACE

The influence of tobacco use on oral health has been the subject of numerous scientific studies worldwide over the past few years. Thus it has been well established that the use of tobacco products has a detrimental effect on the oral mucosa and the periodontal tissues. This issue has given oral health professionals a whole new task to tackle. As dental clinicians follow their patients on a regular base for a number of years, it is quite reasonable and practical for tobacco use prevention and cessation to be implemented in the daily dental practice.

Oral health professionals need education and training as well as board-certified evaluation of tobacco use prevention and cessation skills. Numerous dental clinicians and educators report a lack of self-confidence either in applying or teaching tobacco use prevention and cessation, respectively. Additionally, a number of barriers to tobacco use cessation, such as underdeveloped professional experience, time constraints for education and lack of financial compensation, need to be removed or mitigated. These issues may be solved more efficiently with joint efforts using a network of public health and health professionals of dentistry and dental hygiene. Past symposia and workshops held in the United States of America together with a consensus meeting and one international workshop in Europe have highlighted the importance for the dental profession's involvement in tobacco use prevention and cessation. However, no comprehensive model for evidence-based undergraduate, graduate and continuing education in tobacco control, research involvement, or public health approaches have yet been accepted by the global dental community.

Therefore, it appeared reasonable and most timely to invite dental and dental hygiene educators, scientists in the dental community and experts in public health to attend the First European Workshop on Tobacco Prevention and Cessation for Oral Health Professionals, in the fall of 2005. Thirty-five experts from 11 European countries and the U.S.A. were invited

from October 8 to 11 to the venue in the medieval castle of Munchenwiler, Canton of Berne, Switzerland.

The main goals of the workshop were:

- to review public health approaches in tobacco control, and to define the role of the dental profession within these activities
- to review the present paradigms and current approaches of effective tobacco use prevention and cessation in the dental practice
- to provide directions for further research
- to update recommendations for both the education and assessment of tobacco use prevention and cessation skills
- to communicate the outcome of this workshop to dental and dental hygiene schools and programs and oral health care companies
- to establish a network for knowledge exchange and quality control.

In general, the workshop's emphases were on (1) using evidence-based approaches, (2) exchanging knowledge and experience, and (3) networking among participants and colleagues in the field.

All participants were enrolled in five working groups, with each providing answers to questions in the content of their position paper. The working groups were: (A) 'Undergraduate Education', (B) 'Continuing Education', (C) 'Evaluation of Education', (D) 'Evaluation of Tobacco Use Cessation Counselling in the Dental Office', and (E) 'Public Health Issues'.

The outcome of this conference includes a Workshop Consensus Report based on the position papers of the five working groups as well as a Tobacco Use Cessation Care Pathway. This care pathway diagram for tobacco use prevention and cessation activity in dental practice suggests a direction based on the best available evidence, while acknowledging the practical constraints of the dental office.

Prior to the workshop, all participants were provided with educational material describing Motivational Interviewing techniques that are commonly used to elicit behavioural change. Dr. Steven Ondersma from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, put together a comprehensive pre-workshop programme that allowed the participants to gain valuable insight into the process of Motivational Interviewing. Dr Ondersma's contribution and guidance was greatly appreciated by all attendees.

Thanks to the patronage of the Swiss National Stop Smoking Campaign 'Smoking is harmful - Let it be' and its project 'Tobacco - Interventions in Dental

Practices' and the collaborative sponsorship from Oral-B Laboratories and Pfizer Inc., the First European Workshop on Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation was brought to life. It has provided a valuable network that continues to support the development of professional care interventions to promote oral health for all.



Dr. Christoph A. Ramseier
Workshop chair

