FDI Vision 2030: Delivering Optimal Oral Health for All

Any attempt to predict all the challenges and opportunities facing our profession in the coming decade is both a courageous and an audacious task. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is a case in point—a dramatic event that could have been anticipated but not pinpointed to occur at a specific time. Its significant impact on the delivery on oral health care demonstrates with stark clarity why our profession must be resilient. This quality, which we as a profession have exhibited time and time again, will be ever more important in the future. Total health and oral health are absolutely intertwined and cannot exist independently and apart. Hence, the FDI World Dental Federation’s (FDI) Vision 2030 Working Group judiciously selected existing and emerging changes to health care delivery, which both directly and indirectly will affect our profession, as the framework for the FDI Vision 2030: Delivering Optimal Oral Health for All report. Acknowledging the increasing burden of oral disease and the inadequacy of population-level prevention and effective care for those in need, the FDI Vision 2030 report advocates for our profession to be part of, and oral health care professionals to be actively involved in, all efforts to improve health for all.

As a profession we must embrace change and, more than ever, advocate for better integration of oral health within overall health. FDI Vision 2030 identifies a number of key present and future challenges for our profession and our professional autonomy; it sets out how these can become opportunities to improve oral health, reduce oral health inequalities, and contribute to reducing the global burden of oral diseases. The report also outlines strategies to integrate our profession within global policies that drive health care delivery, including the United Nation’s Sustainable Goals and Universal Health Coverage (UHC). It also recognizes how societal changes, such as ageing populations, will require the oral health workforce to adapt, so as to be fit for purpose in delivering optimal oral health care.

The Vision 2030 report is built around 3 pillars:

Pillar 1. Recognize the need for Universal Coverage for Oral Health and to assure that “[b]y 2030, essential oral health services are integrated into healthcare in every country and appropriate quality oral healthcare becomes available, accessible, and affordable for all.”

Four elements need to be addressed to achieve this goal:

1. disease prevention and early detection;
2. care close to home, affordable, and accessible;
3. better oral health outcomes at lower costs; and
4. convergent platforms for oral health awareness.

Pillar 2. Recognize the need for Integrating Oral Health into the General Health and Development Agenda and to assure that “[b]y 2030, oral and general person-centred healthcare are integrated, leading to more effective prevention and management of oral diseases and improved health and well-being.”

Such integration needs to:

1. address shared social and commercial determinants of health;
2. recognize that untreated oral disease accounts for a considerable fraction of the noncommunicable disease (NCD) burden; and
3. implement and enable access to oral health care services across health care systems worldwide.

Pillar 3. Recognize the need for Building a Resilient Oral Health Workforce for Sustainable Development to assure that “[b]y 2030, oral health professionals will collaborate with a wide range of health workers to deliver sustainable, health-needs-based, and people-centred healthcare.”

Such an oral health workforce needs to:

1. focus on prevention of oral disease;
2. screen for and monitor systemic health conditions;
3. integrate environmentally friendly and appropriate technologies to benefit patients;
4. implement oral health resource and workforce planning in cooperation with governments, educators, and oral health professionals.

These pillars are buttressed by a foundation of supporting educational activities that are needed to educate “a responsive and resilient profession [and] ensure that by 2030 healthcare professionals will have the knowledge, skills and attributes to contribute appropriately to the effective prevention and management of oral diseases and collaborate across health disciplines to improve health and well-being.”

Educational efforts are needed to:

1. enhance the focus on evidence-based dentistry and critical thinking;
2. educate and train oral health care professionals to learn how to advocate for oral health and empower patients to take responsibility for their own health and well-being;
3. provide education and training for collaborative education and practice across health care disciplines;
4. encourage and implement person-centred approaches to care;
5. promote oral health literacy among patients and all health care professionals;
6. engage with industry partners to provide support for integration of emerging technologies in the context of universal health coverage.
A major emphasis of the FDI Vision 2030 report is the recognition of, and the need for engagement with, many different stakeholders. These will include industry partners, academicians, educators, researchers, and policymakers. Perhaps most critically of all, they include the population at large. To this end, our patients will need to be sufficiently educated to enable them to share in their treatment decisions, as well as be advocates for oral health.

A report such as the FDI Vision 2030 report cannot address all issues facing different countries and regions, nor can it suggest solutions that are relevant to every community. Thus, proposed solutions are not in any way prescriptive; rather they should be regarded as recommendations to support and assist communities to reach solutions appropriate to their particular needs and circumstances.

The FDI Vision 2030 report was created with the purpose of providing guidance on achieving appropriate, affordable, evidence-based, integrated, comprehensive oral health care for all. It has the overarching goal of ensuring that oral health is included in health in all policies and any ensuing health and health care debate. It is an ambitious blueprint to unite all oral health care professionals behind shared goals and aspirations. These include but are not limited to:

- make equitable, available, accessible, and affordable oral health care to all;
- integrate oral health care within existing and emerging health care systems; and
- enhance collaboration between health care disciplines to deliver sustainable, health-needs-based, and people-centred health care.

The recommendations in the FDI Vision 2030 report will change over time, as circumstances change, new health care systems evolve, and integration of oral health and oral health care professionals into the overall health care enterprise become more widespread. Hopefully, the FDI Vision 2030 report will promote the development of best practices that can be shared and emulated worldwide. To help measure progress towards attaining the goals of the FDI Vision 2030 report, targets and indicators are set forth for each pillar and educational goals. To that end, the FDI Vision 2030 report is a living document that must be adapted and updated over time as, together, we deliver optimal oral health for all.

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