
From science to clinical practice — the work of the FDI Commission

The role and responsibilities of the FDI Commission are “to contribute to the development of position statements, analysis and transfer of scientific information to the dental profession and others”. The aim is to review and evaluate the current scientific literature and to present the conclusions as a service to the world dental community.

Composition

The eight voting members of the Commission, the FDI’s ‘scientific arm’, represent different scientific disciplines in order to cover as many areas of dentistry and dental research as possible. The current members are: Prof Elmar Reich, Germany, Chairman, Prof Newell Johnson, UK, Vice-Chairman, Prof Asbjörn Jokstad, Norway, Dr Daniel Meyer, USA, Dr Ricardo Parodi, Argentina, Prof Lakshman Samaranayake, Hong Kong, Prof Hideaki Suda, Japan and Prof John Clarkson, Ireland (representing the IADR).

Ex officio members of the Commission are representatives of the World Health Organisation (Dr Gennady Pakhomov), of the International Organisation for Standardisation (Dr John Stanford) and of the Congress & Education Committee (Prof Göran Koch).

Mode of work

Almost all projects of the Commission are

initiated by proposals from the Member Associations of the FDI, who normally submit their suggestions in the first quarter of each year. All proposals are considered, but not all proposals will be included in the Commission’s working programme.

A Project Manager, one of the members of the Commission, is appointed for each work project and traditionally, it is then the task of the Project Manager to organise a review and evaluation of the current scientific literature relative to the topic and to report on the findings and conclusions to the Commission. For all of the projects, a selected panel of experts and referees contribute to the development of reports and statements.

The Commission has also studied the development of so called evidence-based dentistry and concluded that this method may be used for certain topics of the working programme which will be developed in co-operation with the Cochrane Collaboration and selected university institutes worldwide. This method changes the methodology of evaluating scientific reports by classifying the evidence in different categories. It also requires considerable technical and statistical work, which could prolong work projects of the Commission and could also involve considerable costs.

The current conclusion of the Commission is that not everything in dentistry can be evaluated by using a strict evidence-based technique at the highest level, not only because of the technical and financial implications, but also – especially for new and emerging problems and therapies – because a sufficient amount of studies and literature are not yet available. Therefore, the Commission will also continue to address such issues and not wait for more final and conclusive evidence. The ambition is to continue to offer the Member Associations and the individual clinicians the service of early information on topical issues.

Outcome of the projects

Depending on the topic, the outcome of the Commission's work projects varies and the following are a few examples:

- Some projects are on-going for a longer period of time, such as the projects on HIV/Aids and Oral Cancer.
- After the approval by the Commission, the scientific review papers are submitted for publication in the *International Dental Journal*, which is the main source of information regarding the outcome of the Commission's work.
- A selection of summaries of, or highlights from the full reports are also published in *FDI World*. Examples are presented in this issue.
- Draft FDI Statements on important topics are submitted to the Council and subsequently to the General Assembly for approval.
- A number of the topics of the Commission's work programme are also presented at the Annual World Dental Congress and at other educational programmes.

The current working programme

The following is a list of the current projects of the Commission. Additional topics will be considered at the Commission's meeting in early April.

- 1-93 The HIV/Aids Pandemic and Dentistry
- 2-95 Quality of Restorations
- 7-95 Environmental Issues Related to Dentistry
- 4-96 Mouth Rinses
- 5-96 Xylitol – An Evaluation
- 7-96 Oral Cancer
- 8-96 Optimal Intake of Fluoride
- 3-97 Dental Erosion
- 4-97 Complementary Dentistry
- 5-97 Minimum Data Set For Oral Health Records
- 6-97 Core Messages in General and Oral Health
- 7-97 Side Effects of Resin-Based Materials
- 8-97 Fluoride in Restorative Materials
- 2-98 Standards and Criteria for Testing of Materials
- 3-98 Interface between Oral, Coronary and Cerebrovascular Health
- 4-98 Occupational Health Risks
- 5-98 Quality Control of Dental Implants
- 6-98 Bleaching Materials and Toothwhiteners
- 1-99 New Forms of Resistant TB – Therapy and infection control for dentists
- 2-99 Indications and Contra-indications for Topical and Systemic Antibiotics in the Management of Periodontal Disease

Information about the Commission's work and projects can also be found on the FDI's website: www.fdi.org.uk