

World Oral Health Day (WOHD)

SADJ MARCH 2022, Vol. 77 No. 2 p56

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Last year, the FDI launched their three-year campaign theme: **BE PROUD OF YOUR MOUTH.**

Be Proud of Your Mouth is not about having a perfect mouth; it is also about having a healthy one.

The FDI would like people to value and take care of their oral health and to make the correct decisions in order to protect their oral cavity. This good oral status will require a lot of action: Be Proud of Your Mouth by doing this. For example, Be Proud of Your Mouth by visiting the dentist regularly; Be Proud of Your Mouth by brushing your teeth twice, a day; Be Proud of Your Mouth by cutting down on sugary treats. To inspire action, we need to explain 'why', and this is where the campaign strapline fits in. In 2021, the FDI encouraged the public to take action by focusing on the importance of oral health in order to enhance overall health. Now in 2022, they are reiterating this message by highlighting the fact that an unhealthy mouth can severely impact every aspect of life. That is why they calling upon everyone to:

LOOK AFTER THEIR ORAL HEALTH FOR THEIR HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING.

There is no denying that Oral health is multi-faceted as it allows one the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow and convey a range of emotions with confidence and without

pain, discomfort and disease. An unhealthy mouth can restrict your capability to perform these everyday functions, which can have a severe impact on your quality of life by affecting your emotional, social, mental, and overall physical well-being.

Poor oral health can negatively impact personal value and self-image, which is harmful to emotional well-being, contrary to this good oral health can help us keep a positive state of mind. There are also emotional advantages of smiling, and a healthy mouth can give you the confidence to smile more often, further improving general feelings of wellness.

A stable mental health status includes our emotional, social, and psychological well-being and this affects how we think, feel and act, and is important at every stage of life. Oral diseases have far reaching consequences from missing work and school, to low self-confidence and how you socialize, or even your ability to enjoy a simple meal. The encouraging news is that most oral health conditions are principally preventable and can be treated in their early stages to prevent further progression.



Human beings build their social well-being and interpersonal skills by interacting with others and not social isolation. Oral diseases can impact personal relationships and make us more resistant to social interactions. Feeling embarrassed about our teeth and mouth can result in social withdrawal and isolation. A healthy mouth can also lead to better sporting performance and help prevent sports injuries.

The notions of emotional, social and mental well-being can sometimes be explained in different ways because they generally overlap.

For the purposes of this campaign, the following definitions have been applied:

- Emotional well-being: how we think, feel and relate to ourselves. It is about having healthy self-esteem.
- Social well-being: how we interact with others. It is about being positively engaged with the world.
- Mental well-being: it is mainly the absence of mental disorders. It is about our ability to cope with day-to-day life, work productively and the contribution we make to the community.

While we are cognisant of the fact that there are widespread disparities that exist around access to, and uptake of, oral health services and the financial constraints the governments are having, we know that Universal Health Coverage (UHC) especially for oral health services, cannot be achieved overnight. We also take advantage of moments like WOHD as an opportunity to persuade our governments to do more especially if a lot of the resources are channelled to primary healthcare and health promotion. Countries at all income levels can take steps towards achieving UHC by developing strong basic packages that integrate sound oral healthcare.

We encourage all our members to participate in this year's World Oral Health Day and encourage their patients to also participate. By posting the be proud of your mouth slogan all over social media and also adding photos of the mouths to show how they are looking after their mouth.

Let's all be part of the positive change that we want to see.