

When the inevitable happens

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The loss of colleagues can be especially throbbing when you knew each other well and felt like family. Paying tribute to a deceased associate shows respect and acknowledges the sadness that may flood the working industry. Taking time to celebrate the life of the fellow colleague offers an opportunity to share memories and recall stories of how the co-worker made a difference in the lives of others.

Death by definition is the irreversible cessation of all biological functions that sustain an organism. It can also be defined as the irreversible cessation of functioning of the whole brain, including brainstem. Brain death is sometimes used as a legal definition of death. The remains of a former organism normally begin to decompose shortly after death. Death is an inevitable process that eventually occurs in almost all organisms. (Anon., 2021)

According to the WHO there is a rise in the death rate for all top ten diseases except two, in high-income countries. Ischaemic heart disease and stroke are the only causes of death in the top 10 for which the total numbers have gone down between 2000 and 2019, by 16% (or 327 000 deaths) and by 21% (or 205 000 deaths) respectively. High-income is the only category of income group in which there have been decreasing numbers of deaths from these two diseases. Nonetheless ischaemic heart disease and stroke have remained in the top three causes of death for this income category, with a combined total of over 2.5 million fatalities in 2019. In addition, deaths from hypertensive heart disease are rising. Reflecting a global trend, this disease has risen from the 18th leading cause of death to the 9th. (WHO, 2021)

Death is inevitable and over the past few years, the association and the profession at large has lost prominent figures within the oral health fraternity. The emergence of the Covid-19 has amongst many other effects, made many of people reflect more on death. This may have been caused by daily statistics of how many people had succumbed to the virus, which were and still are being published. The daily statistics of people getting infected may have resulted in many people starting to reflect on their own lives. During this period, we lost many colleagues, friends and family.

Such a communique may be something that is out of the ordinary for the association, but because we understand that there is no timeline that can be put to grief. We would like to say that our thoughts are with the oral health community during this time of sorrow following

the loss of their loved ones. We would like to wish all comfort during the difficult time, and our deepest sympathies go to each and every member of the SADA community.

This particular communique was inspired by the growing number of requests from members to pay tribute to their friends and colleagues who have passed on. Due to the decisions that have been taken and the standards that the journal subscribes to, the SADJ has not been able to accommodate these noble requests. Since we felt very strongly about this gesture, we felt that the purpose would be served through the SADA communique. We wish peace for all who have suffered a loss.

