

# Making an Impact: Oral Health Knowledge in Action



## Update 2014



### Dean's Welcome



Prof Thomas Flemmig

HKU Dean of Dentistry

E-mail: [flemmig@hku.hk](mailto:flemmig@hku.hk)

Although Hong Kong is a world-class, developed city, the latest HKSAR Department of Health's *Oral Health Survey (2011)* shows that the vast majority of adults still have poor oral hygiene and experience tooth decay and gum disease.

Staff and students at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry thus have an important role, not only in dental training and research, but also in engagement and service among the wider community, through knowledge exchange. We are keen to partner with different sectors of the community who share our strong sense of individual and corporate social responsibility, so as to improve oral health and well-being here and abroad.

Indeed, the World Health Organization and FDI World Dental Federation encourage alliances among different sectors to achieve sustainable oral health equity worldwide. Moreover, the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (shown below) form a blueprint to meet urgent needs of the world's most disadvantaged groups.

We look forward to collaborating with external groups to continue making a direct difference in people's lives, and we sincerely thank the partners who have already joined in our knowledge exchange activities, some of which are highlighted in this Update. For more information, please e-mail [dentke@hku.hk](mailto:dentke@hku.hk) and see our Faculty's Community Project blogsite at <http://tiny.cc/30jerw>. +



# + Promoting healthy oral habits during early childhood

Team Leader: Dr Yanqi Yang, *Clinical Assistant Professor in Orthodontics*  
Tel: 2859 0252; E-mail: yangyanq@hku.hk



## Problem

Prolonged thumb-sucking during early childhood, as well as other oral habits such as bedtime bottle-feeding and long-term use of a pacifier/dummy, can lead to developmental problems in the teeth and jaws. These problems are expensive and time-consuming to treat later in life and can lead to other problems in eating and speaking.



## Solution

Parents can be taught to stop or prevent their child's poor oral habits and to promote healthy ones, including breastfeeding, which has other benefits for the child. At the same time, the parents' and caregivers' oral health knowledge can be improved, starting from before the baby is born.



## Action

With support from the HKU KE Fund and a government grant, teams of Faculty students under the mentorship of staff have been holding workshops and individual consultations for pregnant women, parents, and kindergarten teachers about good and bad childhood oral habits, and how to look after children's teeth and gums at different ages.

# + Improving oral health among Chinese minorities

Team Leader: Dr Chun-hung Chu, *Clinical Associate Professor in Community and Family Dentistry*  
Tel: 2859 0287; E-mail: chchu@hku.hk



## Problem

Chinese ethnic minorities in mainland China often live in remote areas and lack access to oral health education and services. As a consequence, their oral health is often poor, which may lead to serious medical problems in addition to reduced well-being and quality of life.



## Solution

Easy-to-use oral health educational materials (from the HKSAR Department of Health) can be converted to simplified Chinese and integrated into fun lessons for children in kindergartens and primary schools. Already present tooth decay can be treated with fillings, and early decay can be stopped by the topical application of a fluoride agent.

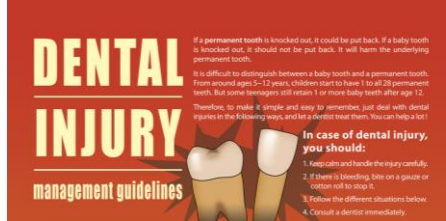


## Action

With support from the HKU SERVICE100 Fund, an outreach team of Faculty undergraduate and postgraduate students under the mentorship of staff gave oral check-ups and emergency treatment to 400 children in Yunnan in southwest China. They also led oral health and hygiene classes to teach the children to take care of their teeth and gums for life.

# + Training school teachers to deliver dental first aid

Team Leader: Dr Mike YY Leung, *Clinical Assistant Professor in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*  
 Tel: 2859 0511; E-mail: [mikeyyleung@hku.hk](mailto:mikeyyleung@hku.hk)



## Problem

Studies co-authored by Faculty staff found that schoolteachers in Hong Kong rarely receive training on how to deal with dental traumas, such as knocked-out, displaced, or fractured teeth. Many do not know that knocked-out permanent teeth can be put back, or that a dentist should be seen straight away.

## Solution

A team that included Faculty staff created practical guidelines for the general public and for schools, incorporating the latest professional recommendations on managing different types of dental trauma. Research showed that the information was effective in improving teachers' knowledge of dental first aid.

## Action

With support from the HKU KE Fund, two teams of Faculty students under the mentorship of staff have partnered with schools organisations to raise awareness among teachers about oral health and the best ways to deal with dental emergencies. An e-mail hotline is available for further Q&A ([mikeyyleung@hku.hk](mailto:mikeyyleung@hku.hk)).

# + Using dental X-ray exams to return birthdays

Team Leader: Dr Gloria HM Wong, *Clinical Assistant Professor in Paediatric Dentistry*  
 Tel: 2859 0261; E-mail: [wonghmg@hkucc.hku.hk](mailto:wonghmg@hkucc.hku.hk)



## Problem

Many developing countries do not have effective birth registration systems. Lack of accurate estimations of people's ages has implications for securing their legal rights—for example, among asylum seekers or those displaced by climate change because of rising sea levels, loss of land, and loss of homes.

## Solution

Routine dental X-rays can be used to verify or create birth records for children and young adults, as the stage of tooth development correlates with an individual's age. This method of age prediction is more accurate than conventional assessments, such as studying bone development.

## Action

With support from the HKU KE Fund, a team of Faculty postgraduate students under the mentorship of staff has been working with volunteer dentists and a relief agency to give oral check-ups to abandoned children in Chennai, India. Dental X-rays from the check-ups are used to calculate ages for use in official identity papers. A Faculty PhD student has set up a related global charity (<http://www.dob-foundation.org>).



## + FACULTY STAFF IMPACT PROJECT

2013-14

**Empowering Kindergarten Teachers and Parents to Deliver Oral Health Education to Young Children**, Dr Chun-hung Chu (leader), Dr Xiaoli Gao, Prof Edward CM Lo, Prof Cynthia KY Yiu, Dr Gillian HM Lee

## + FACULTY STUDENT KE PROJECTS

2011-12

**Promotion of Children's Oral Health Through Knowledge-building Among Ante-natal Women**, Dr Yanqi Yang (mentor), Ms Candy Kwan-ning Ma (student leader); KE Partner: Tsan Yuk Hospital

**Or Bridging Dentistry with Secondary School Science in Hong Kong**, Dr C Jayampath Seneviratne (mentor), Ms Shirley Ching-ching Kot (student leader); KE Partner: Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups

2012-13

**On Becoming Babywise: Oral Health Knowledge Education Among Parents**, Dr Yanqi Yang (mentor), Ms Janet Sei-min Chan (student leader); KE Partners: Eugene Group, Colgate-Palmolive HK Ltd

**Management of Jaw, Face, and Dental Trauma—Educational Campaign for Primary and Secondary School Teachers**, Dr Mike YY Leung, Prof Gary SP Cheung, Prof Lim K Cheung (mentors), Ms Tiffany Chi-lok Chan (student leader); KE Partners: Anglican (Hong Kong) Primary Schools Councils, Hong Kong Council for Educational Administration

2013-14

**Getting to Know More: Oral Health Consultations for Kindergarten Children and Their Parents**, Dr Yanqi Yang (mentor), Ms Wai-ling Tse (student leader); KE Partner: Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children

**Giving an Identity to Undocumented Children in Chennai, India**, Dr Gloria HM Wong (mentor), Dr Jayakumar Jayaraman (student leader); KE Partner: India Lutheran Development and Relief Agency

**Oral Health Promotion Among Homeless People in Hong Kong**, Dr Chun-hung Chu (mentor), Ms Shinan Zhang (student leader); KE Partner: St Barnabas' Society and Home

**Disclosing the Truth in Your Mouth**, Prof Cynthia KY Yiu (mentor), Mr Nichol Chun-wai Tsang (student leader); KE Partner: The Independent Schools Foundation Academy

**Management of Jaw, Face and Dental Trauma: Educational Campaign for School Teachers**, Dr Mike YY Leung, Prof Gary SP Cheung, Prof Lim K Cheung (mentors), Ms Tiffany Chi-lok Chan (student leader); KE Partner: Anglican (Hong Kong) Primary Schools Councils

**Updates on First Aid Management of Maxillofacial and Dental Trauma**, Dr Winnie WS Choi (mentor), Ms Cherrie Cheuk-yiu Hung (student leader); KE Partners: Hong Kong St John Ambulance and the Auxiliary Medical Services Christian Fellowship

**Oral Health Promotion to the Disabled**, Dr Dominic KL Ho (mentor), Ms Stephanie Wong (student leader); KE Partner: Hong Kong Rehabilitation Power

**Teeth for Life: Prevention and Replacement of Missing Teeth**, Dr Katherine CM Leung (mentor), Mr Chun-pang Poon (student leader); KE Partner: Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union

**Development of an 'App' for Oral Self Care Among Chinese Children**, Prof Colman McGrath (mentor), Ms Teresa Cheuk-yu Ho (student leader); KE Partner: CCC Kei Faat Primary School (Yau Tong)

**Be an Oral Healthy Musician: Dental Engagements with Chinese Wind Instrument Players**, Dr James KH Tsoi (mentor), Ms Betty Liang (student leader); KE Partner: New Tune Music Association

## + FACULTY STUDENT SERVICE100 PROJECTS

2012-13

**Oral Health Promotion in Yunnan, China**, Dr Chun-hung Chu (mentor), Ms Shinan Zhang (student leader); KE Partner: Colgate-Palmolive HK Ltd

2013-14

**"Dentice": Dentist-to-be, Service to Thee, Hunan Project 2014**, Dr Mike YY Leung (mentor), Ms Ka-yan Cheung (student leader)

For previous Faculty Staff Impact Projects, please see the booklet "[Making an Impact](#)"; for more details on all projects, please visit <http://tiny.cc/30jerw>

