



香港浸會大學
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



傳理學院
School of Communication

Knowledge Exchange Dialogue

between HKU Faculty of Dentistry &
HKBU School of Communication



Faculty of Dentistry
The University of Hong Kong

35 Years
Advancing Oral Health & Well-being

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School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University

Dear Reader

On behalf of School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University, I would like to thank Professor Chun-hung Chu and HKU Faculty of Dentistry to offer our students this great opportunity to make their professional knowledge visible.



This booklet comprises ten stories about ten awarded KE projects conducted by HKU Faculty of Dentistry between 2015 and 2016. Based on the interviews with the project advisors and leaders, our students sketch each project from a human interest perspective by focusing on the role it plays and the impact it has made in the community.

This collaboration with HKU Faculty of Dentistry allows our students to have hand-on practice in a real context. Involving themselves into this project, the students understand better how to write for making impacts on others. We hope that HKU Faculty of Dentistry and HKBU School of Communication will have further collocations to promote oral health to the public.

Dr Michelle Z Huang

Lecturer

School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University

Faculty of Dentistry The University of Hong Kong

Dear Reader

Stepping into the year of 2017, we are honoured to be a part of the milestone celebration of our Faculty's 35th Anniversary. To kick off the celebration, our faculty holds the Knowledge Exchange (KE) Award Ceremony 2017 to recognise our staff and students' outstanding contributions in promoting dental care to district residents, minorities, and local communities.



We are pleased to have two honourable guests Professor Andy Hor, Vice-president & Pro-Vice-Chancellor, HKU and Mr Hoi-wai Chua, Chief Executive of Hong Kong Council of Social Service, to confer the awards to the outstanding Knowledge Exchange projects.

Our mission is to enhance dental health locally and internationally through research and education. This mission leads us to the accolade as the world's top dental school. We will continue to strive for excellence and keep on advancing societal well-being service to the community through future knowledge exchange projects.

We would like to express our gratitude to Dr Michelle Huang and her students from the School of Communication at Hong Kong Baptist University for helping us promote oral care to the public. We look forward to more fruitful collaborations in the future.

Professor Chun-hung Chu

Associate Dean (External Relations),
Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Oral Health Promotion – An Endless Mission

Written by

Ho Wun Ching Sharon, Leung Kwok Shu, Yuen Hau Ying

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Faculty KE Award 2016

Empowering a non-governmental non-profit organization to deliver primary oral care to Hong Kong citizens

Team leader: *Dr Dominic KL Ho*

Team members: *Dr Mike YY Leung, Prof Chun-hung Chu,
Dr Duangthip Duangporn*

Oral Health Promotion – An Endless Mission

Do you brush your teeth day and night? Do you find a hard time biting into a slightly overcooked porkchop? When being forced to “recite” clinical catchphrases like “an apple a day keeps the doctor away,” and “prevention is better than cure” upon catching a cold or fever at young age, have you ever thought about applying them to the oral cavity you opened widely for these chants?

For a rough estimation, nearly all adults aged between 35 and 44 have caries experience with a four-fifth of them suffering from bleeding gum. Just in case you are trying to pull out a mirror and start worrying, you may want to bump into Dr. Dominic Ho and his team around the town to check out their dental community engagement programme.

“Awareness should be higher!”

Dr Ho and his team members initiated their “Empowering a Non-governmental Non-profit Organization to Deliver Primary Oral Care to HK Citizens” programme which won the Faculty Knowledge Exchange Award in 2016.

During an interview with project member Professor Chun Hung Chu, he questioned, “Have you imagined even kindergarten toddlers are experiencing tooth decay?” Surprisingly, about 60 per cent toddlers already have tooth decay at kindergarten age, and almost all of them are left untreated. Dental diseases are no longer a “privilege” of grownups, but also for the young generation.

Realizing most citizens would rather “ignore” oral issues, and the education on dental wellness is so insufficient among other public health topics in heated debate, Dr. Ho’s team thought it was time for a hand from Faculty of Dentistry amid the alarmingly low awareness of oral healthcare in our society.



“Love and Clean Teeth Day” in Tin Shui Wai in May 2015. Volunteers from Faculty of Dentistry are providing emergency dental treatment to needed patients

Mobile Dental Clinics

While tooth decay and gum diseases are increasingly prevalent nowadays, the cost of treatment can range from HK\$100 to HK\$10,000. Partnering with Project Concern Hong Kong and District Councils, three “mobile dental clinics” were out on “Love and Clean Teeth Day” to provide residents with free dental examinations and premium emergency surgeries. For a good social cause, patients can check out with a discounted offer at only HK\$100.

Aiming to promote oral health in society and self-care in disadvantaged communities, the vehicles reached out to seven dispersed urban and rural towns, including Tin Shui Wai, Taiipo, Kwai Hing, Tung Chung, Tsz Wan Shan, Shatin, and Sham Shui Po, with the coordination of District Councilors. “It’s very worrying that you can’t even find a single dentist in some of these areas,” added Professor Chu.

Breaking the Vicious Cycle cost-efficiently

“The lack of nearby dentists decreases the motivation to seek treatment. When diseases scale up through the lapse of time, patients will undergo much more unnecessary pain, and the cost of treatment will eventually ramp up due to the severity.” Oral disease + agony + costly expense + painful treatment =? Try to add up this equation and see if “ignorance” is your answer. According to Professor Chu, this is the case for many Hong Kong citizens which often leads up an ultimate vicious cycle.

Through the “Love and Clean Teeth Day”, the team hopes to spread the message to district residents that dental examinations and healthcare should be conducted on a proactive and routine basis for the best oral protection, instead of having lengthy, unpleasant, and costly operations when their teeth are much or all decayed.

On each promotion day, around 200 participants benefitted from the free dental check-ups and emergency surgeries with more than 80 per cent of them having raised their awareness on oral wellness. Professor Chu described their initiative as a “cost-efficient strategy” which enables citizens to grasp the preventative mind set through simple treatment of relief or entertaining activities.

Training up “Community Dentists”

As the case for many large corporations, HKU Faculty of Dentistry takes pioneering steps in bearing social responsibility, even without a handsome surplus at easy disposal. As a ground-breaking bold move, Year 4 undergraduates stepped out of their comfort zone to operate dental clinics under the supervision of licensed staff. “Students are ‘protected’ against ‘horrifying’ cases in class through our careful filtering. But out on spot, they simply didn’t have the choice.”



Students from Faculty of Dentistry are teaching citizens about primary oral health care on another “Love and Clean Teeth Day” in Tsz Wan Shan during campaign period

Whenever patients came to them, they must handle the cases, no matter how “terrifying” their conditions were. “In exposing them to and preparing them for physical challenges,” said Professor Chu, “we want to train up their sense of mission and duty as passionate ‘community dentists’ who serve patients with dedication, respect, conduct, ethics, and professionalism. Hopefully, students will understand the dentistry path they’ve chosen to cross is a serious and professional discipline.”

Not “Transfer” but “Exchange”

We were reminded by Professor Chu humbly that what the team does not “transfer” but “exchange” knowledge. He described the campaign as successful with joint efforts from multiple sectors, thanking different parties for their commitment and inputs. Professor Chu stressed that Faculty of Dentistry alone cannot achieve such encouraging heights for their lack of community connections.

To the team, the success of the project depended on all-rounded planning and comprehensive stakeholder engagement. While the faculty contributed expertise in driving the initiative, they never forget to praise their partner organizations – Project Concern Hong Kong and District Councils – for playing important roles in organizing ground work from planning through execution, including logistics, human resources, and sponsorship.

Although the Faculty of Dentistry possesses credibility and specialised knowledge, they do not have the networks to empower citizens and mobilise clinic vehicles. District Councilors and Non-governmental organization helpers offered a huge helping hand to ensure the project’s smooth operations by leading citizens to the nearby mobile dental clinic to enjoy the team’s dental services. In this instance, the faculty and its project associates exchanged knowledge in areas of dental healthcare and community event management for mutual benefit.

Spreading Their Wings

Feeling honoured to witness the success of their programme, Dr Ho and his teammates plan to take their project to Phase II.

Three mobile clinics are currently taking turns to visit different areas for everyday dental examination and customized dental treatment. Given their convenience in accessing remotely located districts, their operational costs are relatively high for all kinds of manpower and equipment expenses.

With a HK\$2.5 million grant from the Hong Kong Jockey Club in the coming March, the team wishes to cover these costs for more frequent outreach to more dwellers in more districts for greater resonance and impact. For the continuance of the programme, the team has been landing their eyes on fostering training courses and activities to helpers, volunteers, and citizens, as well as the production of educational materials for “Love and Clean Teeth Day”, so the key message can be spread from individual participants to their family and friends, and eventually the wider community.

From a Dentist’s Heart

From the lens of the project team, promoting the importance of prevention and maintaining oral health should never come to a halt. Growing out small, the campaign has now started to attract the public’s attention on dental wellness. Although it is difficult, the team has prepared to address this issue step by step through connecting themselves closer to the community. As they believe dentists bear the responsibility of improving humanitarian well-being for the good of society, they foresee and are ready to overcome the challenges ahead, as they turn a page, move on and hold onto tomorrow, for a rough and tough journey ahead.



“Love and Clean Teeth Day” at Shatin New Town Plaza. It is also the opening and welcoming ceremony of a new member to the current mobile dental clinic fleet

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Oral Health Care for Alzheimer's Disease Elderly

Written by

Chan Hoi Ching Cherry and Cheung Wing Sze Judy

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Faculty staff KE impact project

Empowering a non-governmental non-profit organization to deliver home-oral care to people with Alzheimer's disease

Team leader: *Prof Chun-hung Chu*

Team members: *Prof May CM Wong, Dr Katherine CM Leung, Dr Dominic KL Ho, Dr Duangthip Duangporn*

Oral Health Care for Alzheimer's Disease Elderly

"The ageing population is increasing the number of patients with Alzheimer's disease in Hong Kong," said Professor Chun Hung Chu, "Suffering from Alzheimer's disease is just a matter of time for everyone. We have been concerned about the dental conditions of the elderly, especially those with Alzheimer's disease. In order to help them and their caregivers, we thus launched this knowledge exchange project."

Alzheimer's Disease Matters

Professor Chun Hung Chu, Associate Dean of HKU Faculty of Dentistry, coordinated a Knowledge Exchange project – "Empowering a non-governmental non-profit organization to deliver home-oral care to people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers". Dr Katherine Chiu Man Leung, Dr Dominic KL Ho, Dr Duangthip Duangporn were also core project members.

The project aimed at bringing the importance of oral health to the elderly with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. "Collaborative effort is the key to project success," said Professor Chu. Cooperating with Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association (HKADA) and the dentistry students, the project team had a chance to publicize the message of oral health to Alzheimer's disease patients and their caregivers.



Dentistry students provide dental checkups for Alzheimer's disease patients in HKADA Tsuen Wan Centre.

Oral Health for Alzheimer's Disease Patients

"The society tends to neglect oral problems," said Professor Chu, "yet dental problems trigger many diseases." For instance, upper respiratory diseases can be caused by tooth decay. Bacteria can grow in mouth and spread to the respiratory tract. Tooth decay can also affect ingestion. Common dental problems in the elderly include dental caries, periodontal diseases and unstable denture. Such problems not only bring pain, but also cause chewing weakness and indigestion. For Alzheimer's disease patients, their lack of ability in self-care leads to a more severe status.

To enhance the performance of the dental students for procedures, Professor Chu and his team provided the HKADA staff with dental knowledge that was applied in their daily care routine for the patients. Assisted by the district council offices, the team was able to get in touch with Alzheimer's disease patients in four districts. They gave educational oral health talks, free consultations and check-ups for the participants.

Dental Care is about Prevention, Not Cure

During the project, many Alzheimer's patients suffered from poor dental problems, which could have been better restored upon an early diagnosis. Such cases gave his team more motive to promote oral care to an even greater number of Alzheimer's disease patients.

"Dental care is about prevention, but not cure," emphasized Prof. Chu, "Prevention can relieve both suffering and additional financial costs of patients and their families." He really hopes that the caregivers of Alzheimer's disease patients better understand this message and face up to the dental care problem.

Not to Rely, but to Take Initiative

Though the project gained support from the dental industry, Prof. Chu expressed that obtaining human resources was one of the biggest obstacles. "Our team are just professionals in dentistry," said Prof. Chu, "It's hard to attend to every aspect in the project, like public relations and promotion."

Unlike most academic research, Prof. Chu did not apply for any subsidies or resources from the government. He reminded us that we cannot rely too much on the government. "The government has its own priority list on giving subsidies," said Prof. Chu, "Before asking for help from the government, think what you can do to help the government."

“You don’t always need much money,” said Prof. Chu, “you need to know how to allocate the resources in your hands.” He has made effective choices in utilizing available resources, like technical support from his dentistry students and HKADA. These two parties have been huge proponents in his project.

Collaborative Work within our Society

Prof. Chu believed that projects can better educate students through hands-on practice rather than lectures. This is why he encourages students from diverse fields to be volunteers. “This is not just an individual project for my team,” emphasized Prof. Chu, “It’s collaborative work between different sectors in our society. Without them, it’s hard to attain success.”

“Our project still has a long way to success,” said Prof. Chu. He regarded the project as a very first step in promoting oral care among the community of Alzheimer’s disease in Hong Kong. If this project eventually achieves further success, this would act as a very beneficial reference for researchers in the industry to explore projects about oral care in other kinds of diseases.

Prof. Chu also expressed his gratitude to HKU Faculty of Dentistry and the Knowledge Exchange Office for giving the award as a recognition of his team’s efforts. Through launching more KE projects in the community, stakeholders from different sectors can work in collaboration to better promote dental health in Hong Kong in the future.



Dentistry students take initiative to collaborate with the HKADA to help Alzheimer’s disease patients.

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Demystification of Dental Implants

Written by

Cheng Cheuk Yan, Chu Oi Yi, Lee Shu Yui

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Faculty staff KE impact project

*Development of an evidence-based information booklet for
patient education on dental implants*

Team leader: *Dr Nikos Mattheos*

Team member: *Dr Jie Yao*

Demystification of Dental Implants

Missing teeth is a very commonly faced problem. People may lose their natural teeth because of many reasons, like having an accident or suffering from diseases. Dental implants are often the best treatment to replace missing teeth. Dr. Nikko Mattheos, Clinical Associate Professor in Implant Dentistry from HKU Faculty of Dentistry, has developed an evidence-based booklet for dental implant patients to clarify the myths about dental implants.

Reasons behind the designing of Dental Implant booklet

There is a great misunderstanding of the effects of dental implants among patients. Many of them are misled by the online promotion of dental clinics, which highly exaggerate the positive effects of dental implant.

“Some patients thought the dental implant could last forever,” said Dr. Mattheos. “Some might even have the wrong conception that they do not have to do regular check-ups after the completion of implant surgery” he added.

Apart from clarifying these misunderstanding among patients, it is also hoped to let patients and their families be more informed on dental implant before agreeing to the surgical procedure, such as both possible positive and negative effects after the implantation.

“Many patients are only being informed about the procedure of the implant surgery without attaining a thorough understanding about it.”

On the other hand, this booklet is not only for dental implant patients, but also an educational reference for the dental students.

“It is very important to educate and breed students with the sense of morality of telling the truth of dental treatments when they face their clients in the future.” emphasized Dr Mattheos.



Dr. Mattheos tells us where the misleading information about dental implant comes from.

Diminishing Misunderstanding among Patients towards Dental Implants

This booklet includes the clarification of the issues concerning dental implants that most patients misunderstood in an objective way. Firstly, a dental implant is not suitable for everyone.

Most people with good oral health are suitable for implant treatment. However, some oral conditions may increase the risk of failure or complication of the treatment. For example, the treatment will be more complicated if the patient does not have sufficient healthy natural bone to support the dental implants.

Some people wrongly expect that dental implants will be as strong as their natural teeth. Some patients may even believe dental implants will function better than natural teeth. In terms of tasting and chewing experience, there will be noticeable differences between dental implants and natural teeth. However, dental implants will not totally function as natural teeth. As stated in the booklet, patients' sensation of pressure when chewing might be affected after implant treatment.

Another common misconception is many people think the dental implants last forever. Implant treatments have a high success rate, but it does not mean the dental implant can last forever. According to the booklet, some parts of the dental implant may need repairing or replacement within five to ten years after the surgery. Dr. Mattheos reminded that dental implants will also suffer from bacterial infection; therefore they require more cautious care. "If you have dental implants, you will have to take care of them much more actively than your natural teeth," said Dr. Mattheos.

Explaining Patients' Most Asked Questions

Apart from clarifying misunderstood and misleading concepts, this booklet also includes some commonly asked questions from patients. "Many patients would like to ask me whether the implant surgery painful and how painful would it be", Dr. Mattheos told us.

"Basically, it is hard to tell them how exactly it feels because this is a very subjective issue since everyone's tolerance to pain is different." "It seems that Chinese can stand against higher degree of discomfort or pain compares to European and Australian."

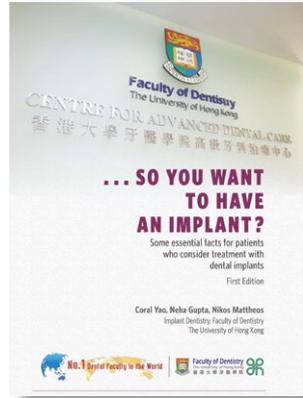
Dr. Mattheos showed some statistics to us during the interview and explained that dentist would ensure there is no discomfort during the surgery as local anesthetic would be injected. However, most patients would undergo post-surgical pain. "Pain and swelling would decline gradually within two weeks of time," said Dr. Mattheos. Regarding the level of pain in the beginning of post-surgical period, "It is similar to and could be compared to the extraction of tooth", he added.

Availability of the Dental Implant Booklet

The General public and patients could attain a copy of the booklet for free in The Prince Philip Dental Hospital, some dental clinics and also the official web page of the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Hong Kong.

Future Planning

Dr. Mattheos and his teammates will continue to provide simple and reliable information to patients regarding to treatment with dental implants. Besides the booklet, Dr. Mattheos also provides web channels and websites to clarify some patients' unrealistic expectations. "It is important to let patients know what to expect and their commitment on dental care after implant surgery." Furthermore, Dr. Mattheos wishes to nurture dental students about more appropriate ways to present objective facts to patients.



The dental implant booklet for patients by Dr. Nikos Mattheos and his colleagues

"Despite making a very good clinical treatment, if your patients are dissatisfied with the outcome, it's still a failure." Dr. Mattheos told us. Success does not only refer to a successful treatment, it also means to complete patients' satisfaction with the outcome. Satisfaction sometimes is closely related to expectation.

"Sometimes failure is not because the treatment failed but because the patient was expecting too much." noticed by Dr. Mattheos. If the patients have a wrong and unrealistic expectation, they would not feel satisfied even the implant treatment succeeded. The booklet designed by Dr. Mattheos is important because it does not only help patients to develop correct concepts on what to expect after implant treatment, it also helps the dentist have satisfied patients.

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Sharing Knowledge Through Action

Written by

Darren Chan and Offy Leung

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Faculty staff KE impact project

*Empowering a non-governmental non-profit organization to
deliver primary oral care to citizens*

Team leader: *Dr Mike YY Leung*

Team member: *Prof Chun-hung Chu, Dr Dominic KL Ho*



Sharing Knowledge Through Action

A team of dentistry professors led their students to help grassroots through their knowledge and expertise. The impact was beyond expectation.

Breaking Old Mindset

In 2015, three professors of the Faculty of Dentistry from The University of Hong Kong (HKU) led a team of student volunteers on a community project “Empowering a Non-governmental Non-profit Organization to Deliver Primary Oral Care to Citizens”. By using their expertise, the team helped and educated over 1,000 citizens from three local districts.

Led by Dr. Mike Leung and his team members, Professor Chun-hung Chu and Dr. Dominic Ho, the project “Empowering a non-governmental non-profit organization to deliver primary oral care to citizens in Tai Po, Wong Tai Sin and Kwai Hing” was launched from 2015 to 2016, aiming to improve citizens’ dental health and oral health knowledge.

“There’re plenty of dental service providers in Hong Kong, but some people seldom use them.” said Professor Chun Hung Chu, Associate Dean of HKU Faculty of Dentistry.

“We learn from statistics that grassroot citizens don’t regularly use dental services”, continued Professor Chu, “The reason could be they lack the awareness of dental health, or they’re simply afraid of going to the dentist.”

When being asked why some people are reluctant to see the dentist, Professor Chu suggested that it can be attributed to people's concept of dental health. "The concept of having a dentist appointment is different from seeing a doctor. You don't have to be sick in order to see a dentist; you can visit them just for check-ups or maintenance purposes."

"What we want to promote in the community is that, you can come to a dentist regularly just for a check-up. As a dentist, I would be delighted to see a patient coming regularly to maintain oral health condition, rather than an infrequent patient with a mouthful of rotten teeth," added Professor Chu.

Making it happen

The project was made possible with the funding from the Knowledge Exchange Fund at HKU, but more resources are needed to reach and serve hundreds of citizens. To ensure the project could be smoothly executed to create its desired impact, the team worked with Project Concern and district councillors from respective districts.

A mobile dental bus was provided by Project Concern, a local NGO that provides medical assistance to low-income citizens. "The dental bus is equipped with extensive and professional equipment, which allowed us to perform simple dentist surgeries for the citizens," said Dr. Mike Leung, Clinical Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Dentistry and the coordinator of this project.

In addition, to promote the event in the community, the project also worked with district councillors from the three districts. "By collaborating with NGOs and district councillors, we can ensure the project to reach the community and help people in need, while the importance of dental health can be promoted," said Professor Chu.

To help hundreds of citizens in each event, the project needed more dental practitioners. Therefore, the team invited their students to help contributing to the society. "We recruited students who would like to volunteer for us. Our students are eager to take this opportunity to practice what they have learned," said Dr. Leung.

Serving the community

With the help of volunteering students, NGOs and district councillors, the Love and Clean Teeth Day was organized in Tai Po, Wong Tai Sin and Kwai Hing.

"We provided two main areas of services," explained Dr. Leung. "On the dental bus, we performed check-ups and basic treatments for the community. Many people, especially the elderly, rarely visit the dentist as no dental clinics are close to where they live. That's why we provided free and convenient dental health services to them in the project"

He added, "Meanwhile, we also educate people of different ages and generations on how to brush your teeth and have a healthy diet. Our aim is to let them know how to maintain their oral health."

During the event, the dentistry students were in charge of different tasks. Some performed oral check-ups for patients while others helped educating citizens to improve their dental health. Under the guidance of their teachers, students not only practiced their skills through hands-on experience, but also built up their commitment to the society.

"Our role as teachers is not limited to executing the project, but also supervising our students to treat patients. The experience serves as a simulation of what they will face after graduation. When walk-in patients come to them, they'll be able to make a diagnosis before performing the right treatment," explained Dr. Leung.

"The Butterfly Effect"

While the project helped citizens to improve their oral health, Dr. Leung explained that they're not the only group benefited from the project. "Our patients were grateful and really appreciated our free dental services. At the meantime, our students found this event meaningful and memorable," said Dr. Leung. "They rarely have the chance to practice their knowledge outside of campus, so this is a great chance for them to use what they have learned to serve the community."

Through this experience, the team of professors wanted to create a long-term impact on their students. "With limited resources, what we can do in the community might be insignificant," said Dr. Leung. "But we want to influence our students like the butterfly effect, that is, by showing and motivating them to use their knowledge to contribute to the society. They'll be more likely to do that after graduation, and they can influence others from their actions as well."



The Love and Clean Teeth Day is made possible with the help of students and social groups.

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Bringing smiles back to Sri Lankan

Written by

Jess Cheung and Sandy Chin

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Faculty staff KE impact project

*Oral health promotion from Hong Kong to the remote world:
Sri Lanka*

Team leader: *Dr James KH Tsoi*

Team member: *Prof Chun-hung Chu*

Bringing smiles back to Sri Lanka

Award-winning doctors strive to optimize oral health in the third world

Dental health is not a great concern in Sri Lanka. With the hope of increasing the public's awareness on dental health in developing countries, Dr. James Kit Hong Tsoi and Dr. Waruna Dissanayake initiated their first outreach oral health program in a rural village of Sri Lanka.

The meaningful program

Dr. Tsoi and Dr. Dissanayake launched their "Oral Health Promotion from Hong Kong to Remote World: Sri Lanka" project in June 2016. The project aimed to promote oral health and exchange dental knowledge with Sri Lanka citizens and dental practitioners.

After flying for five hours, the three-day program started in two phases: knowledge exchange program and outreach program.

As one of the winners of 2016 IADR/AADR William J. Gies Award in the Biomaterials and Bioengineering Research Category, Dr. Dissanayake shared the latest pulp regeneration technology with the experts and students in the Faculty of Dental Sciences, University of Peradeniya.

'Since it is the only dental school in Sri Lanka, we would like to exchange our ideas in the session to create knowledge dissemination among the provisions.' He explained.

A health camp was also held in the village school in the last two days to provide free dental check-ups, along with education lectures to local children and adults.



Dr. Waruna Dissanayake and Dr. James Tsoi make a great team.

Expect the unexpected

Behind every success there are struggles, and this project was not an exception. Though Dr. Tsoi had spent months planning the trip, it was hard to predict emergencies. "We planned to visit Bhutan originally, but the trip had to be cancelled due to some incidents," said Dr. Tsoi, unveiling the little secret. 'Meanwhile, there was a new opportunity from Sri Lanka suggested by Dr. Dissanayake. It was such a short time to re-plan the trip within a month, but we actually made it.'

The program was also a challenge to two graduate students from the University of Hong Kong, Mr. Alex Cheng and Mr. Dave Kwok. "Unlike the local students, they obviously had hesitations for their first time conducting treatments in outdoor health camps." Dr. Dissanayake smiled. "But I am really satisfied with their performance and fast adaption. It turned up to be an unforgettable experience for them."

Educate through surprise and laughter

When talking about the response of the program, Dr. Dissanayake compared the dental development between Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. He said that it was surprisingly an entirely new experience for the dentists in Sri Lanka. "The experts were enthusiastic about our visit. For them, it was an update for what they are practicing there," he commented.

He laughed when talking about the village children who were so scared of the dentists placing the dental tools in their mouth during screening. "But they did enjoy and felt excited because everything was new to them." "Maybe Alex and Dave were more nervous than the children," Dr. Tsoi joked.

Locals Serving Locals

Back to the home country with his wife Dr. Jeevani Epasinghe, Dr. Dissanayake felt fulfilled when serving the locals as an experienced dentist. He acquired a precious chance to meet his former professors in the University of Peradeniya. Despite a merely three-day stay in Sri Lanka, it was apparent that this was a place he belonged and he hopes to empower others to make positive changes.

Dr. Dissanayake has been concerned about the rising number of oral cancer patients in Sri Lanka, as most local people pay little heed to dental care. One major cause for oral cancer is the overconsumption of tobacco and areca usage. The habit of chewing areca usually starts from childhood and is accepted in Sri Lanka. "It has never been considered as a bad habit and it is hard to eliminate," said Dr. Dissanayake.

Be the first impact

This program is the only one that serves outside Hong Kong among all the funded KE projects. "Due to a lack of facilities and the accessibility for the dental treatments, we had to make extra efforts to provide the most convenient dental treatments in the health camp," mentioned Dr. Tsoi.

Among 200 villagers, they discovered five oral cancer suspects through dental screenings. This is a comparatively high ratio among the world. "It's a very worrying situation. We would never know how serious it was if we didn't take the screenings," Dr. Dissanayake stressed, "there is a four percent prevalence in oral cancers in Sri Lanka, which is much higher than that of Hong Kong (less than one percent)."

What it matters

Dr. Tsoi hopes to generate public attention to the significance of the program. 'If we have sufficient funding, we can send more staff and students for outreach programs. We would like to see a greater number of beneficiaries in the future.'

"It is necessary to explore the possibility of utilizing alternative manpower resources that could be trained to deliver oral disease preventive programs.' Hopefully, Dr. Jeevani Epasinghe has already applied for a follow-up program.

Volunteering fosters academic collaboration and professional engagement to impact remote communities. It is our responsibility to contribute and serve those in need.



The graduate students Alex Cheng and Dave Kwok must skip some compromised procedures for their first basic treatments outside clinics.

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Learning about Oral Hygiene through Having Fun

Written by

Wong Yee Ting and Chan Ting

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Service 100 (student KE) project

A Reason to Smile

Team leader: *Prof Cynthia KY Yiu*

Student leader: *Mr Arthur Man*

Members: *Mr Chiu Hiu Chun Hilton, Miss Chin Hoi Man, Miss Chan Cecilia, Miss Lau Shuk Man Ashley, Miss Fan Hei Nok Jocelyn, Miss Penny Chuah*

Learning about Oral Hygiene through Having Fun

“Not what you do for them, but how you care for them”. A little step closer to the dentists. “A reason to smile” is a project which targeted to the people who have intelligence disabilities and aim increase their oral health awareness.

For most people, it takes a matter of days for a dentist's appointment to extract a painful tooth. But for intellectually disabled Hongkongers, it could take up to three years due to the lack of services that meet their needs. It is hard for the mentally disabled to express themselves, leaving their discomfort unknown to their caretakers.

A group of students from HKU Faculty of Dentistry realised the critical condition at hand, and have initiated a project with the help from faculty mentors to improve the situation.

A Reason to Smile, one of the projects of Student Knowledge Exchange (KE) project 2015-16 held by HKU Faculty of Dentistry, aims to lend a helping hand to people with intellectual disabilities and improve their quality of life through teaching them oral hygiene.

Professor Cynthia KY Yiu, as faculty advisor, has been awarded a grant of HK\$5,000 from the HKU SERVICE 100 Fund (incorporating the Student Knowledge Exchange Project Grant) to conduct this project with the student project team.

“We want to help the people with intellectual disabilities with raising their oral health awareness, teaching them proper oral hygiene instructions and how to improve their oral health.” said Mr Arthur Man, the student project team leader who helped the minority with his schoolmates.

Let's Find a Reason to Smile

The project team aims to teach the children with special needs about oral hygiene through having fun. In Hong Kong, a lot of people especially children are scared of seeing dentists. After having fun in the interactive session, the dentistry students hope that the patients can overcome their fear, receiving proper oral health knowledge and finally have a reason to smile.

Lack of Oral Health Awareness

Few dental alternatives are available in the public sector, especially for the minority. They tend to have limited access to oral health care. The lack of awareness is the major cause of bad oral health. It occurs due to the income gap or inaccurate perceptions of parents in teaching their children about the importance of oral hygiene.

Oral hygiene is generally expensive which may prevent low-income families from seeking proper dental treatment. Plus, most of the parents may underestimate the significance of oral health.

“What they do not know is that even though permanent teeth will replace primary teeth,” said Arthur, “decayed primary teeth may cause further infection. It may badly affect the growth of permanent teeth or lead to bad arrangement of the teeth. Premature loss of primary teeth may cause other problems like crowding or malocclusion. It will be a wholesome issue.”

On the other hand, dental services are inadequate to support the minority with special needs. Sometimes, general dentists may not have the experiences in taking care of patients with intellectual disabilities. Although we have the school dental care service which is a good start for Hong Kongers to know more about oral health, the service only caters students from primary one to primary six. “The dental service is apparently not sufficient for the pre-school children from three to five.” said Professor Yiu.

Learning through Having Fun

The student team gave the target group a presentation titled “An introduction and prevention of oral diseases”. They talked about how improper tooth brushing or dietary habits might cause or worsen oral health and gave proper oral health instructions.

Also, they organized an interactive activity which taught the disabled how to brush and use dental floss correctly on tooth models. In the Q&A section, they took an easy-to-understand approach answering any questions the target groups had on oral health.

Not What You Do for Them, but How You Care for Them

Students in the University rarely have chances to meet people with special needs in dental clinics. “This is a good exposure for the students,” said Professor Yiu, “They can try to target other people with special needs.” By putting themselves in their shoes, students understand better their needs and feelings.

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Blessed to Create Bright Smiles to Our World

Written by

Chan Kam Lok

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Service 100 (student KE) project

Creating Brighter Smiles

Team leader: *Dr Mike YY Leung*

Student leader: *Ms Ashley SM Lau*

Members: *Mr Chan Lue Hang, Mr Wong Kam Wing, Mr Ho Lik Kwan, Mr Lam Kwong Chuen, Miss Tang Ka Hei, Mr Wong Siu Hin, Miss Cheung Ka Yan*

Blessed to Create Bright Smiles to Our World

“There is only one happiness in life, to love and be loved.” A dentist is not only a job to provide treatment; they devote their love and passion for their profession. This is how to create smiles.



Members from the “Creating Brighter Smile” service project (Ashley Lau, Chan Joshua Lue Hang, Wong Derian Kam Wing, Ho Ben Lik Kwan, Lam Walter Kwong Chuen, Tang Chloe Ka Hei, Wong Louis Siu Hin & Cheung Ka Yan)

In 2016, a group of “Dentice” members from the Faculty of Dentistry decided to take action to their love and passion. This is how the project “Creating Brighter Smile” came out.

By serving the Hong Kong minority community, migrant workers, and Kunming families, these members noticed the most important factor in being a dentist.

“As a student, we feel stressed about our study and worry about the uncertainty of our future. Hence, we are easy to neglect the bigger picture - giving back to our community,” claimed Ashley Lau, the project team leader.

In our society, benefits and profits always come first, people would just look on with their folded arms if they don’t receive benefits from it.

She believes that the best way to inspire others is to participate in the voluntary service because actions speak louder than words. This belief became one of their objectives during organizing the “Creating Brighter Smile”.

“Creating Brighter Smile” is a service project organized by Ashley Lau and her teammates. It aimed to help two target groups, domestic and migrant workers in Hong Kong, and families in Kunming. In views to enhance their own awareness on dental care, they wanted to promote some basic knowledge in dental care.

Prevention is better than cure. The project hoped to bring long-term impacts on their service targets. For instance, they suggested some preventions of tooth decay and taught the communities how to effectively brush their teeth.

They Deserved a Brighter Smile

“Domestic helpers are minorities in Hong Kong and seldom care about their dental health. Some don’t even have time to attend a regular dental checkup.” mentioned Ashley about the situation of those domestic workers.

Cooperating with two external partner organizations, the Mission for Migrant Workers and the Heart to Heart Community Care, the team was successful in building up the linkage with the domestic workers.

With the help of the organizations, “Dentice” generated a number of participants and conducted several short lectures for them to raise awareness and provide fundamental knowledge in dental health. Even with different races, skin colors, backgrounds, we all deserve to have a brighter smile.



Members cooperate with the Mission for Migrant Workers to organize lectures about dental health

Moreover, Ashley and her teammates also interacted with those domestic workers individually. This was not only providing some professional advice for them but also communicating with them, like being a friend to know their struggles in Hong Kong. The content of lectures was direct and easy to understand, even for non-dental students.

However, joining service activity is not about how smart you are, but about how much time and passion you are willing to devote. Knowledge is easily attained; whereas, passion is hard to enrich.

When You See their Bright Smile, All Your Efforts Deserve

The service to domestic workers is just a part of service in “Creating Brighter Smile”, the service trip to Kunming is another portion of the project.

In Kunming, there are fewer dentists and low dental knowledge level. They chose Kunming as their outreach service district in order to increase their dental health knowledge and provide dental cares to 200 children.

Within five days, families and children were surprised to learn the dental information, even without prior dental knowledge.

“It is good to leave Hong Kong to take part in community service. We met challenges which were not expected,” said Doctor Karen Cheung, one of the service project members. Karen thinks that this is the time for the student to experience limitations.



Members conduct the dental care for the children in Kunming during the outreach service

“Students are used to working in clinics or hospitals. In a new environment, without particular equipment, they have to be flexible and step out of their comfort zone,” said Karen.

There are many things to rearrange in a limited environment. For instance, the team had to arrange how the dental chairs and stools placed, and how the equipment passed in the shelters. It must be tough if we force ourselves to adapt to new obstacles. Yet, this can be “fun to solve”.

A Blessing to Bring Other a Brighter Smile

“Sometimes, we feel lost after we stand in the dentist’s position. We may forget why we chose to study dentistry, why we love dental care, and why we want to help people,” said Karen.

“But every time I finish these service trips, I felt like being recharged again and I am empowered to continue in my position.” Under abundant facilities, equipment and training experiences, dentists are blessed to help people by their professional knowledge.

“Being a dentist, we can’t ignore what is happening in our society,” emphasized Karen. With our abilities, we take up responsibilities. From the dental chair to a poor environment, the team needs to be reminded about why they chose to be a dentist. In their position, they are not just fulfilling the requirements for the job.

Dentists have a more sacred mission. They are missioned to bring others a brighter smile.

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Help Who Helps

Written by

Chan Ka Yan Karen, Ip Huen Ying Omi, Kwok Yan Yu Iris

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Service 100 (student KE) project

Better Teeth, Better Health

Team leader: *Dr James KH Tsoi*

Student leader: *Ms Jasmine Wong*

Members: *Miss Yon Jun Yu Madeline, Mr Li Ching Nim Gibson,
Mr Ng Yu Tung Tom, Miss Lai Pui Tung Tracy, Miss Ho Chui Yi Tracy*

Help Who Helps

Inspired by her domestic helper, a dental student Jasmine Wong from The University of Hong Kong initiated the “Better Teeth, Better Health” project, aiming to provide basic dental education and oral examination to domestic helpers.

Origin of ‘Better Teeth, Better Health’

Foreign domestic helpers account for approximately three percent of Hong Kong’s population. They play an important role in providing household services to Hong Kong families, yet, their rights are unseen by most of us. Their dental care is not covered by their employees unless it is an emergency situation.



Project team members (from left to right): Vivienne, Tracy Lai, Madeline, Jasmine, Tracy Ho, Gibson, and Tom

‘They (domestic helpers) are being deprived for a lot of things. They can’t look for a dentist on day offs as most of the dentists are not working on Sundays.’ said Jasmine.

Without much disposable income, 93 per cent of the interviewed helpers had never visited a dentist or only visited once when they had dental problems according to a survey in 2013.

Most domestic helpers did not receive proper dental care or possess any oral hygiene knowledge. Jasmine, as a dental student, was motivated to take dental care as the first step to serve the community of domestic helpers, just as they served our community.

Jasmine soon gathered interested and passionate teammates from the Faculty of Dentistry in HKU and started working on the project with the organization Helpers for Domestic Helpers. The group aimed at enriching dental health and knowledge of domestic helpers. They also wished to raise awareness on the importance of dental health and inform the domestic helpers on their oral status by advising any treatment needed.

The group designed activities targeting these goals for the participants on both sessions held respectively on 17 and 24 July 2016. The team and other student volunteers from the faculty of dentistry planned to provide basic oral education, oral hygiene instructions, simple oral examination, and distribute souvenirs to the participants.

Highlights of the Service

To prepare for the event, the team contacted companies for sponsorship on souvenirs and conducted a site visit to the venue, St. John's Cathedral, as early as February. They also borrowed posters from the tooth club to demonstrate useful dental information to the participants. Leaflets were made to promote the event, and were distributed around the venue on the day of service.



Oral examinations for participants

A lot of domestic helpers who passed by the cathedral after going to their church were attracted by their promotion on the spot. With the help from their partner Helpers for Domestic Helpers, the promotion of this event had successfully reached the community of domestic helpers and attracted them to participate.

The service was divided into three stations, and participants could receive souvenirs upon the completion of all stations. Participants will first be provided with basic dental education, including the prevalence, causes, complications, and treatment of common oral diseases, specifically caries and periodontal disease.

Common dental misconceptions were introduced to them as well. Stepping into the second station, student volunteers would provide domestic helpers with oral hygiene instructions. Participants could learn the proper way to brush their teeth and how to choose the correct toothbrush for themselves. In the last station, which was also a highlight of the service, participants could receive free oral examinations by the students and get advice about their oral status.

“Although we could only carry out simple examinations due to constraints of materials and apparatus, I felt that our task was immensely important since it informed domestic helpers of their oral health status and they received advice on further treatment.” said Madeline Yon.

Though only simple examination could be done in a limited time, the students were able to inform participants the general overview of their oral condition. Participants could obtain advice from the registered dentist who supervised the whole process for further treatments with reference to their oral condition report. After completing the stations, participants could get a pack of souvenirs containing a simple dental care kit.

Challenges Encountered

On the first day of the service, occasional obstacles hindered them to precede the project. "We found there was a leak from the ceiling on the first day," said Tracy Lai, one of the team members of the project. The venue in St. John's Cathedral was under renovation, which made the environment less ideal for the activities to go on, especially the oral examination.

Although the environment kind of shocked and obstructed the team, it did not reduce the interest of the domestic helpers joining the activities and was improved on the second day of the event.

"There were around 400 participants over the two days. It was beyond our expectation, which was only 100 to 150 participants per day," said Jasmine. The overwhelming number of participants confounded them as souvenirs were running out.

As resources were running short, the team could not provide oral examination to every participant, which was a pity to the team. Though some of the participants could not get souvenirs or an oral examination report, they still re-ceived basic dental education and hygiene instructions from student volunteers.

Positive Feedback from the Participants

The project came with a huge success, receiving great feedback from the domestic helpers. "The most enlightening thing is that they raised the awareness on dental health," said Tracy. "They were very willing to get more treatments after the examinations and listening to treatment advice."



Student volunteers chatting with participants

The members felt pleased to see the change in attitude toward dental care of the domestic helpers and were delighted to know that they would like to receive dental treatments in the future. However, at the same time, the team realized that the participants preferred to get dental treatments rather than merely oral examinations.

“I was surprised by the enthusiasm of the domestic helpers,” said Tom Ng, a member from the team. “They gave us warm and active responses which motivated us a lot.” They were overwhelmed by the positive responses. The feedback from the domestic helpers was very heartening and engaging in contrast to the Hong Kong citizens. Domestic helpers also welcomed and valued dental advice more than the local clients that the students encountered.

Aspirations

The contribution of the project group has been acknowledged by HKU Faculty of Dentistry with a KE award in March 2017. With the remarkable and fruitful experience of providing dental services to the domestic helpers, the group hopes that the promotion of dental health for domestic helpers will not stop here.

The group consider doing another similar event and wish to provide the domestic helpers with regular free oral check-ups, yet the development of this project relies on the help and guidance of more dentists. “There isn’t much we can do at the moment without the guidance of our mentors and support from the faculty and university, but I hope more can be done for them.” said Jasmine.



Project team members and student volunteers

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Take a Step forward earlier, Reduce the Avoidable Pain Later

Written by

*Cheng Man Yi Cherry, Wong Sze Man Stella,
Yeung Wai Nga Cherry*

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Service 100 (student KE) project

Oral Health Promotion to Preschool Children

Team leader: *Prof Edward CM Lo*

Student leader: *Ms Samantha Chu*

Members: *Mr Chan Lue Hang, Miss Fong Wing Yan Katelyn,
Miss Lau Yee Ting, Mr Mak Chung Kan, Miss Shum On Ki,
Miss Tam Lok Yan, Miss Tsang Hau Tung*

Take a Step forward earlier, Reduce the Avoidable Pain Later

“Some tortures are physical and some of them are mental. But the one that is both is dental.” -- by Ogden Nash, an American poet.

To prevent children in Hong Kong from undergoing such terrific tortures in an early stage, Chair Professor Lo, Edward Chin Man, Chair of Dental Public Health, led a group of second year dental students from HKU Faculty of Dentistry to promote oral health among preschool students.



“Most parents lack the knowledge to concern the oral health of their kids.” said Professor Edward Lo

The Faculty Knowledge Exchange (KE) Awards were introduced in 2011 in a bid to recognize each Faculty's outstanding KE achievement that has made contributions to economic, social and cultural aspects in the community. “Oral Health Promotion to Preschool students” is one of the awarded projects in KE award 2016.

This one-year project includes service talks and dental check-ups. With the help from four service centres in Tsim Sha Tsui, Causeway Bay, Kwun Tong and Shek Kip Mei, the students successfully recruited 250 parents to participate in the informative talks to 230 children, ages 3 to 6, about the importance of dental check-ups.

They reached their target audience and received sponsorship from the service centres. All the participants enjoyed the program for free.

Learning from Obstacles

"I felt very satisfied in this project," said Joshua, a Year 2 dental student. From planning, discussing, executing the project, solving the questions from parents and handling the clinical case of kids, the students agreed they have learned a lot out of the classroom.

"We called the patients one by one for confirmation of dental check-ups," said the team leader Samantha Chu, who gathered interested and passionate teammates to work together with this project. They encountered various difficulties but they came across them with the assistance of Professor Lo.

"When we were examining the growth of teeth of kids," said Joshua and Ken, "we witnessed some cases that we have never learned before. Professor Lo then gave us instructions and guidelines in order to deal with each case properly"

"Students are intelligent and performed better than I expected because this is their first time having preschool students as target patients," commented Professor Lo.

Instill Fundamental Concepts of Oral Health in Parents First

Perhaps due to the difference in the parental care district, students falsely regarded that the education level of parents are positively related to their awareness of child's oral care. "Holding a service talk in Causeway Bay Centre brought me an unforgettable experience," explained Samantha, "Originally, we assumed most parents living in the surrounding districts have attained relatively high education level to help with the oral care of kids, however this is not the case."

"It is not necessary to fill the cavity in primary teeth since they will shed," said a parent in the Q&A session. Some parents obviously do not have basic understanding of dental health protection, regardless of their academic qualifications. Instead of dentists, the team thinks parents should play a more essential role in maintaining oral health of their kids.

They can give instructions to their children on tooth brushing and the use of dental floss in everyday life. Before successfully nurturing their children in the proper ways of protection, they should take initiatives to acquire more knowledge of it first.

Handling of Children's Emotion- The Biggest Challenge yet Interesting

When it comes to dental care, the majority of children imagine the scary sounds and unbearable pain in the dental clinic when having their teeth cleaned and filled. Though the program only included a check-up, children were in panic and showed reluctance to open their mouth. "Some kids refused to have the check-up and cried out loudly," said Grace. Another student Katelyn explained, "We used quite a lot of overlapping words and told jokes to relieve their stress."

"Parents also helped to manage their kids' emotion. Some parents even brought a toy as a prize for kids after check-ups," added Samantha. It was a challenge for students while also being an amusing and practical experience, as they do not interact with the children patient in everyday lessons.

Inspirations

The project undeniably raised awareness of oral health promotion to kids and it was a fruitful experience to students. Yet, this is surely a long-term development. "In the coming year, another group of interested students will join the project in order to improve the dental health of Hong Kong citizens," said Professor Lo.

With the aim of making a bigger impact in society, more stakeholders, including parents, schools, NGOs, and government, should join hands in this ongoing project. In the foreseeable future, we hope not only can kids have better teeth, but also smile brightly.



Year 2 dental students from University of Hong Kong gain much satisfaction and happiness from this project (from left to right: Hayley, Katelyn, Angel, Esther, Samantha, Grace, Joshua, and Ken)

**School of Communication,
Hong Kong Baptist University**

Feature story

Raising Awareness on Dental Public Health in Muslim Community

Written by

Fiona Chan and Charmaine Hui

**Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong**

Service 100 (student KE) project

Oral Health Status of Muslims in Hong Kong

Team leader: *Prof Colman McGrath*

Student leader: *Dr Muhammad Zakir*

Members: *Mr Umer Daood, Mr Usman Ashraf, Mr Abrar Khawaja,
Mr Zhang Jiaguan, Mr Anwar Ul Haq*

Raising Awareness on Dental Public Health in Muslim Community

“People don’t understand. They think it is Muslims that do not know how to access dental care,” said Professor Colman McGrath, “But this is not the case. We want to understand their practices so that we can offer dental services which cater to their needs; while also raising public awareness, not just among the Muslims here in Hong Kong, but also among the professionals.”

Muslims from Different Sectors Working Together

Working with the Religious Head of Muslim in Hong Kong, Professor McGrath and his team from HKU Faculty of Dentistry initiated a Service 100 project to raise the public’s awareness on Oral Health in ethnic minority communities.

“Our aim is to understand their cultural and religious approaches in maintaining their oral hygiene along with what educational material we can provide them in order to educate them on good oral hygiene.” said the student leader Dr. Muhammad Zakir.

The team noticed that most of the Muslims don’t know what emergency dental facilities are available, not only the ethnic minorities, but also the general public. “It is quite alarming for me.” he said. Through this project they hope to assist the ethnic minorities in remaining aware of the importance of oral hygiene and specifically where to receive dental services.



The team is delighted to receive a large number of funds to support the project.

“When I go to the Kowloon Mosque for religious gatherings, people there know that I am studying in the Faculty of Dentistry, so they often ask me what dental services are available in Hong Kong and where they can go when they have dental health problems.” said Dr. Zakir.

“When this project came along, I thought why not help them in a hugely beneficial way and organize a large program to educate them together.”

Given that the situation is relatable to the team, they were more than 100 per cent devoted to this project and determined to reach their objectives. Most of the team members are Muslims and they have a profound understanding about their needs of the religion and culture, which contributed greatly to their project’s success.

Dr. McGrath’s team members, with the help from the Muslim Students Association, HKUSU, organized a two-day program in June 2016. Around 130 Muslims participated in the program. They also held lectures before oral examinations to educate them about oral hygiene, and to teach them how to brush along with flossing techniques.

They worked with external partners including the Islamic Council, the Kowloon Mosque and the Islamic Centre, which supported the project by managing the logistics, providing tools used in oral health examinations, and inviting a number of volunteers to join the project.

Islamic Practices Related to Oral Health

With respect to their religion, they arranged male-to-male and female-to-female patient’s examination, and had separate rooms for both genders. The team was very thoughtful in providing dental operations for the Islamic society regarding their religion. The project also received numerous positive feedbacks from the community. “I periodically receive calls related to oral health. So they know that we are here to help them and are able to get in touch with them.” said Dr. Zakir.

“(When buying a toothpaste,) it needs to be Halal products. You can see some Colgate toothpaste with Halal logo on it. We prefer to use that because we can’t use everything. That is where the cultural and religious differences come in.” Apart from this project, Dr. Zakir raised concern about the availability of dental health products with Halal logos in the market. They think that such religious and cultural aspects are what future dentistry students, the health care specialists and the government should be aware of and work on.

Passing on the Knowledge of Dental Public Health

“Even those who were born in Hong Kong and understand Cantonese very well don’t know about the available facilities.” said Dr. Zakir. The team acknowledged the problem that the publicizing of dental health information is inadequate on a governmental basis. They suggested that the government should subsidize more dental treatments and facilities to provide cheaper treatments for the public, including the ethnic minorities.

The benefits of the two-day program have extended beyond the members themselves. The Muslim community is now better equipped with the basic knowledge of dental care. Hopefully, the knowledge attained can be passed to the next generation.

Meanwhile, Dr. Zakir and the team has expressed concern about the limited number of Muslim students in the faculty to continue transferring knowledge on special dental health services and religious related issues in Hong Kong into their professionalism. They wish to make a long-term influence through more short-term projects in the future.



These two Muslim children are writing the pre-test of oral examination.

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