



Community Engagement

HKU Faculty of Dentistry helps Hong Kong's homeless

20 January & 2 May 2013

Under the mentorship of Dr Chun-hung Chu (Clinical Associate Professor in Community and Family Dentistry), the HKU Faculty of Dentistry sent an outreach team to St Barnabas' Society and Home, Hong Kong, to teach homeless people and those living in partitioned residences about the importance of oral health.

On 20 January 2013, Ms Rita PC Suen (Research Assistant) gave a slide presentation and oral hygiene demonstrations to attendees of a dinner evening titled "Give Love Back – Serve Dinner Event".



Following the success of that event, the Faculty was invited back to St Barnabas' Society and Home on 2 May 2013 to offer oral examinations to elderly homeless people (featured in their society newsletter, <http://facdent.hku.hk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/St-Barnabas-society-NL.pdf>). The dental student team (postgraduates Dr Shinan Zhang, Dr Jade J Zhu, and Dr Chris C Ying and undergraduates Ms Kay-shuen Chan, Ms Jasmine TK Law, Mr Stephen Sutanto, and Mr Chris MH Chan) also gave a health education talk and individual consultations and oral health reports to participants. Health care products were donated by Colgate Palmolive (HK) Ltd and Johnson & Johnson (HK) Ltd.



The extracurricular project allowed the dental students to understand better the dental needs of homeless people. In particular, more than a quarter of the 37 outreach clinic attendees did not perform daily tooth brushing, and many had tooth decay. Their gum health was also poor, and about a half had advanced gum disease. "The findings have spurred the students to plan further volunteering activities during the 2013-14 academic year as an HKU Student Knowledge Exchange Project," says Dr Chu.

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Knowledge exchange (KE) at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry (<http://facdent.hku.hk>) aims to maintain a two-way dialogue between the Faculty and all sectors of the community. The Faculty's KE strategy, public education, and community activities form part of the Faculty's fourth mission of "engagement". We will be pleased to consider any suggestions or comments, or community/school invitations; please e-mail dentke@hku.hk



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