
WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

Launch of Network for Interdisciplinary Oral Health, Australia

2nd Asia Pacific Conference on Integrated Care, Melbourne, 11-13 November 2019

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Despite global evidence of the connection between oral health and general chronic disease, our healthcare system continues to separate oral and general health.

Oral diseases are among the most common of chronic diseases in our community. Yet these diseases, tooth decay (dental caries), gum disease (periodontitis) and oral cancer, are largely preventable oral diseases.

There is an established and growing body of work linking oral and general diseases (and conditions) through common risks and causal pathways. For example, the risk of oral cancer increases with alcohol and smoking, and there is a bidirectional relationship between periodontitis and diabetes. Sugar is a common factor in the triad of oral disease, obesity and diabetes.

Oral disease can be prevented through health promotion, early diagnosis and intervention, and daily personal care, but it requires more than the oral health workforce to be responsible for this prevention. There are many health and care professionals who have the scope to provide information about oral health, screen for disease and risk of disease, intervene early in the disease process, and refer to appropriate care with dental professionals as required.

An integrated preventive model of oral health care is needed that:

- can be practised in various primary health settings across Australia
- is cost-effective, collaborative and efficient
- provides equity of care and access
- makes the most of our knowledge of the relationship between oral and general health

The Network for Interdisciplinary Oral Health (NIOH), formed in 2017, is committed to improving the oral health of Australians through collaborating across the country to build the evidence base and translation into practice of oral health within general health.

Examples of current pilot models of integrated oral and general health are: maternal and child health nurse training in oral screening and referrals; and oral health and medical professionals shared care model for patients with diabetes. NIOH is a growing collective of oral and general health professionals, care workers, academics, educators, consumers, peak bodies and industry from across Australia committed to reducing the impact of oral disease, improving health and well-being; and reducing the economic burden (lost productivity, health system costs and more expensive care) on Australians.

Aims and Objectives:

- a. Launch NIOH and encourage sharing of connections and ideas

- b. Draw attention to the issue of oral health in general health
- c. Attract new supporters

Target audience: All conference attendees

Learnings:

- a. Advocacy and Policy for Oral Health in all health is essential
- b. Increased support needed for cross- sectoral collaboration on practice and research to increase the rate of integration of oral health

Format: Presentations, discussion and networking

Introduction 10 minutes A/Prof Rachel Martin, Prof Hanny Calache

Key Note 20 minutes Dr Erin Hartnett, USA

Work to date 10minutes A/Prof Ajesh George

Audience discussion and questions 15 minutes

Conclusion 5 minutes Prof Hanny Calache

Preferred length: 60 minutes