



Indian Dental Association

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Committed to Dental Excellence

12th August, 2009

Smt. Shila Dixit
Hon'able Chief Minister,
Govt. Of Delhi

The purpose of writing this letter is to request your support for a national awareness programme on a subject that rarely gets much public attention but yet is absolutely critical to overall health – oral health care.

India's National Oral Health Survey, a detailed nation-wide epidemiological study, has shown that dental caries (tooth decay) is prevalent among 63.1% of 15 year olds and as much as 80.2% among adults in the age group of 35-44 years. Periodontal diseases (gum diseases) are prevalent in 67.7% of 15 year olds and as much as 89.6% of 35-44 year olds. The mean DMFT (decayed, missing, filled teeth) score is 2.4 in 15 year olds and as high as 5.4 among 35-44 year olds. (*source: last national oral health survey)

One of the major issues India faces is the low dentist to population ratio of 1:22,500 compared to the WHO recommended ratio of 1:7,500. Dental professionals as well as leading bodies such as the World Health Organisation, therefore, recognise that the primary approach for tackling dental health problems in India has to be a preventive one by brushing twice a day and visiting a dentist twice a year.

Another survey showed that 60% of people surveyed have never visited a dentist, over 50% are not concerned about preventing or curing dental problems, almost 30% do not use any oral care product, 75% of toothpaste users brush only once or less than once a day and over 50% of rural India does not use a toothbrush to clean teeth. (*source: last national oral health survey)

The key for any preventive care regimen to be successful is awareness and public education.

Over the years, the Indian Dental Association (IDA) has conducted various oral health awareness programmes across the country. As you may know, the Indian Dental Association (IDA) is the premier and apex dental organization in India with the largest recognized body of dental professionals spread across 27 States and 200 Branches.

Encouraged by the success of these programmes, the IDA and Colgate undertook a month-long mass contact programme -- Oral Health Month -- in October 2004, reaching 6 towns with the support of 70 dentists. Over the last five years, this programme has intensified and achieved several milestones. Last year, we reached 200 towns with the support of over 10,000 dentists. Oral Health Month is a public private partnership between IDA, an apex body in dental profession and Colgate, the market leader in oral care, is helping offset the huge funds required for such an educational campaign.

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Owing to the success over the last five years, this year, the programme will be conducted over a period of two months beginning in September. Oral Health Month programme will include free Dental Check-Ups conducted by dentists in association with IDA and distribution of valuable consumer education literature on better oral hygiene. This year, we would like to kick-start Oral Health Month on September 12, 2009 which is celebrated world over as World Oral Health Day.

We believe that your presence to flag Oral Health Month on World Oral Health Day will be invaluable and help in drawing attention to health concern that rarely gets the noticed. We would appreciate if you would accede to our request to support the initiative.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Dr. Ashok Dhoble
Hon. Secretary General
Indian Dental Association

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