

Committed to Dental Excellence

09 February, 2021

Dr Harsh Vardhan
Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Government of India, 348-A Wing, Nirman Bhawan
New Delhi - 110 001

Respected Sir,

Subject: Recognition of IDA as a Resource Centre and Collaborative Partner for Public Private Partnership Programmes

The Indian Dental Association (IDA), as you are well aware, is the largest recognized body of dental professionals in the country. Its vision is to attain optimal oral health for all in the country and improve overall health index of the people. Oral health is important for overall health and quality of life inasmuch as oral health is inextricably linked with general health. Therefore, improving oral health of the people will improve the quality of life of the community. Through education, communication, training, research and many other oral health initiatives, IDA has been lending support to all the programme initiatives of the Government to improve overall health conditions in the country. This is done through IDA's wide network of over 700 branches and nearly 75,000 dental professionals spread across 28 State & 9 UTs in the country. *Needless to say, the focus of the health initiatives of IDA rightly is on improving the oral health conditions in the country which will contribute to building a strong and healthy nation.*

Roadblocks to oral health

IDA is committed to the attainment of optimal oral health for all in the country. In this respect, IDA is faced with two major oral health issues of national concern. These issues continue to defeat all efforts at improving the oral health conditions in the country. They relate to: (a) oral cancer and (b) tobacco consumption in various forms and the harmful effects it produces on health. Thus it was important for IDA to suitably address both these issues that will help build oral health awareness among people, *besides providing an institutional mechanism to fight the twin issues of oral cancer and its causative factor - the tobacco habit - to improve overall health and quality of life.*

Oral Cancer Foundation (OCF)

It's a known fact that India has the highest number of oral and throat cancer cases in the world. Every third oral cancer patient in the world is from India. The situation called for swift, sensible measures to curb the growing menace. The setting up of the **Oral Cancer Foundation (OCF)** was a concomitant development of the strategy of pioneering prevention to improve oral health in the country. **Spot and Prevent Oral Cancer Trauma (SPOT) Centres the diagnostic tools** under OCF were devised as a preventive mechanism to help early detection of cancerous lesions.

The SPOT Centres help early detection and treatment of pre-cancerous and cancerous lesions in the oral cavity. Dental professionals adequately trained in detecting cancerous lesions are helped to start SPOT Centres as a part of their dental clinics whereby they are able to perform both the tasks of dental care as well as help reduce the incidence of oral cancer. The SPOT Centres are equipped with trained personnel and suitable instruments under its umbrella to effectively detect and treat oral cancer.

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There are at present over 215 SPOT Centres across the country. IDA has plans to set up 5000 such Centres in the near future. They, together with Tobacco Cessation and Control Centres make significant contribution to oral healthcare management in the country.

National Oral Cancer Registry

India has the dubious distinction of ranking first in oral cancer in the world. While data on cancer, in general, is available, to help secure exclusive data on oral cancer in India, IDA has established a National Oral Cancer Registry. The Registry mainly functions as a database that will not only provide us with exclusive oral cancer statistics but will also facilitate in planning and building strategies for fighting the increasing incidence of oral cancer in our country. Since the establishment of the Registry, data on 6555 oral cancer patients has been collected which presents exclusive statistical information such as the number of oral cancer cases registered; oral cancer rate in men, women and children; the number of deaths registered due to oral cancer, etc.

Tobacco Intervention Initiative

The emergence of Tobacco Intervention Initiative (TII) in 2009 was aimed at addressing the tobacco menace. IDA's tobacco cessation endeavour strives for a "Tobacco Free India" by helping patients quit smoking and consumption of smokeless or chewing tobacco, through behavioural counselling and pharmacological means or a combination of the two. Tobacco Cessation and Control (TCC) Centres under Tobacco Intervention Initiative are certified dental clinics engaged in tobacco cessation. They form the supportive infrastructure of the initiative for tobacco cessation. The goal of TCC Centres is to rid the country of tobacco addiction and save the lives of millions subjected to tobacco related diseases, thus paving the way for improvement in the oral health scenario in the country and quality of life.

TCC Centres can lead to a reduction in the tobacco-related cancers in India responsible for over 40% of cancers in males and 20% in females. In addition, they help reduce the incidence of tobacco-related respiratory diseases and a significant number of preventable deaths on this account.

IDA now has a competent team of doctors initially trained at National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore, specialized in providing tobacco cessation services. Through the master trainers at these Centres, we have now started extending training to other healthcare service providers interested in tobacco cessation and counselling. These trained doctors have set up over 2000 TCC Training Centres which are functioning in about 21 states & UTs and more such Training Centres are being established. IDA has plans to set up 5000 such Centres across the country,

TCC & SPOT Centres Reflect IDA's Social Responsibility

Setting up of SPOT and TCC Centres reflects IDA's continuing crusade against oral cancer and tobacco use which militates against its goal of securing optimal oral health for all in the country. These novel initiatives of early detection of oral cancer and tobacco cessation form a part of IDA's commitment to the community, and reflects its deep sense of social responsibility as the guardian of oral health in the country.

In the light of the significant contribution of SPOT and TCC Centres to oral healthcare management in the country, it would be in the fitness of things if the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recognizes IDA and endorses it as a RESOURCE CENTRE for Oral Healthcare Management so that they will reflect the government's vision.

Since IDA and the MoHFW share a common objective and work towards improving oral healthcare and quality of life, IDA will only be happy to collaborate with the government and work under your Ministry to take the government's vision forward to the masses to have the best of optimal oral health for all.

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We now look forward to collaborating with the MoHFW in implementing government programmes relating to delivery of oral healthcare services *in the true spirit of public private partnership.*

With best regards,

Yours respectfully,
For Indian Dental Association



Dr. Ashok Dhoble
Hon. Secretary General

