

EDITORIAL ...

Despite being known as preventable diseases, dental decay and periodontal disease remain as one of the most prevalent diseases in both children and adults in Nepal. It is worth noting that there is a correlation between them and deprivation and good oral health depends largely on good oral hygiene and diet, which are both habits usually nurtured in early childhood. It may be mentioned that deprivation itself is a vague term comprising of various aspects like social, economic, geographic, sexual, religious, political, emotional, mental & moral norms. Hence addressing one of the most significant societal and public health issues of our day is hard work. Professionals like you have devoted many hours and great conviction to this calling.

Now, more than ever, we need to do more than just recognize the stark fact that deprived community is getting more deprived of basic oral health care.

Oral health services for deprived communities can be improved through community-oriented and community - based oral health programmes. Regular tooth brushing with an appropriate strength fluoride toothpaste and water fluoridation are two key oral health interventions in the community setting. Where water fluoridation is not feasible, alternative fluoride applications and supplementations should be considered. Initiatives aimed at restricting sugary food and drink consumption to meal times and increasing fruit and vegetable intake are also important. In the clinical setting, the use of fissure sealants as well as implementation of ART & ACT procedures can be highly effective at preventing further dental decay.

When seen from public health viewpoint, we need lots of adequately trained human resource to manage the bulk of the simple restorative & preventive treatment. No doubt, care should be a pleasurable experience. If a trip to the oral health provider was a pleasure, then a major barrier to care would be substantially reduced. The training in dentistry is based on surgical model. Only recently has the profession been moving towards a medical model with the introduction of caries susceptibility tests, prescribing remineralizing treatments and identifying risk factors in diet. The oral care delivery system should, further, be based on 'grooming pleasure model' to ensure that everyone gets an easy access to basic dental services.

In the present context, when resources are often limited and professionals are being pulled in many directions, it is important that we join together to focus on our common goal - dentistry for deprived community.