



Informational Background

Inclusion of Dental Therapists as IFDH Members

At the 2019 IFDH House of Delegates meeting, a motion was passed to consider the option of including a new membership category for dental therapists in IFDH. A task force was created. Their report along with global changes over the past 5 years have been used as the basis for this report developed by the current IFDH Membership Committee and the Board of Directors.

Background

Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists are not new members of the oral healthcare team. Several of our Federation members are dual associations with both Dental Hygienists and Oral/ Dental Therapists as members. The global oral health community is multi-faceted and Dental Hygienists, Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists would benefit from coming together to solidify our common goal – *to improve the health of the public*.

Inclusion of Dental and Oral Health Therapists as members of the IFDH does not indicate that countries must recognize or institute these providers. It merely develops a more inclusive Federation. We recognize that the political and professional environment is unique to each of our members. Expanding membership gives IFDH the opportunity to become a stronger Federation of preventive oral health professionals.

The IFDH formed in 1973 as the International Committee on Dental Hygiene and the leadership saw the benefit of changing its name to better reflect our purpose. Thus, we became the International Federation of Dental Hygienists in 1986. The oral health environment continues to evolve and we must remain focused on the future to meet the needs of those we serve. An inclusive Federation of preventive oral healthcare professionals will enable us to have a powerful voice and to better advocate for the public.

What would be the goals of an inclusive Federation?

- Inclusion of preventive oral health professionals in one body;
- Stronger global voice for recognition of our contributions to oral health;
- Proactive measure by recognizing the global movement of combining Dental Hygienist and Dental/Oral Health Therapists' associations.
 - **For example, 23% of our IFDH country members include Dental Therapists:**
 - Australia, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, UK and USA

What would be the benefits of an inclusive Federation?

- A united voice to advocate for the oral and overall health of the public;
- Interactions between professions to increase knowledge and professional understanding;
- Increased membership in IFDH;
- More attendees at HoD meetings and the International Symposium;
- Possible increased sponsorship opportunities for the IFDH, with members having a broader scope of practice and patient base.

Negatives of not becoming Inclusive

- Division of the two/ three professions, unable to take advantage of benefits of each profession;
- Negative perception of IFDH, as not being inclusive and future focused.

What is the Value to the Dental Therapist member to join the IFDH?

- Membership in and support from an international organization that recognizes their contributions and value;
- Access to the member benefits of the current member countries representing dental hygienists, such as educational opportunities, awards and research grants;

The infographic features a central dark blue circle with the title 'How can YOUR dental therapist support YOUR oral health?'. Surrounding this are eight light blue circles, each containing a service and a corresponding icon. The services include: carrying out a full clinical examination, providing homecare advice, preventing tooth decay, providing sports or night mouthguards, restoring teeth, identification of periodontal disease, screening for oral cancer, and providing advice for dental implants. The background is dark blue with light blue geometric shapes and a spotlight effect on the central circle.

How can YOUR dental therapist support YOUR oral health?



Carry out
a full clinical
examination
of teeth, gums
and soft tissues
and plan
your care



Homecare
advice working
with you for
your optimum
oral health



Preventing
tooth decay by
fissure sealants,
placement of
fluoride and advice
on good
dietary choices



Provide
you with
sports or night
mouthguards
or whitening
trays



Restore teeth
with a variety
of materials,
for adults
and children



Identification,
management
and monitoring
of periodontal
(gum) disease



Screening
for oral (and skin)
cancer and
stop smoking
advice



Providing
advice and
treatment
for people with
dental implants

Dental Therapists can work to the prescription
of a dentist (NHS and privately) or carry out treatment
directly without you needing to see a dentist (privately)