New world oral health report released
Almost 100 per cent of adults suffer from dental caries

LONDON, UK: In celebration of World Oral Health Day, representatives of the FDI World Dental Federation presented the latest findings on oral health on 20 March at a press conference held in collaboration with the British Dental Association in London. The report identifies the main obstacles to achieving universal oral health and includes recommendations to improve oral health worldwide.

Among other aspects, the report, titled “Oral health worldwide: A report by FDI World Dental Federation”, highlights that nearly 100 per cent of adults and between 60 and 90 per cent of children worldwide have dental caries, which results in millions of lost school and work hours. For instance, in the US, an estimated 2.4 million days of work and 1.6 million days of school are missed owing to oral disease. In the Philippines, toothache is the primary reason for school absences. The FDI stated that about 97 per cent of Philippine 6-year-olds have dental caries.

In addition, the report states that only 60 per cent of the world’s population have access to oral care, creating enormous disparities between different populations. According to the FDI, people of a lower socio-economic status visit the dentist less often and have fewer fillings, more missing teeth, higher tobacco consumption, higher rates of caries and untreated decay, and higher rates of periodontitis compared with those of a high socio-economic status.

In order to increase access to oral care, the training of the oral health workforce needs to be strengthened and expanded to improve the quality of and increase the number of oral health professionals. Moreover, emphasising that dental care must be at the core of national policies and programmes. In this respect, global and national surveillance should be strengthened to identify risk factors and oral health needs as a basis for developing appropriate approaches and measures, the FDI stated.

Besides a high prevalence of caries, the report found that only 60 per cent of the world’s population have access to oral healthcare (DTI/Photo courtesy of FDI, Switzerland).

DTI group announces Digital Dentistry Show

LEIPZIG, GERMANY: Today, digital technology is one of the fastest-growing market segments in dentistry and digital processes are increasingly determining everyday practice in dental offices and laboratories. In order to offer dental professionals a unique opportunity to keep up with these developments, Dental Tribune International (DTI) will be hosting the Digital Dentistry Show (DDS), the first event entirely dedicated to the field, in October this year.

In recent years, an increasing number of dental companies have released innovations in digital hardware, software and consumables, such as 3-D imaging, CAD/CAM and intraoral devices. DDS will provide comprehensive information on the latest digital technology and is targeted at dentists, dental technicians and representatives of the dental industry.

In contrast to the conventional booth-based presentation of products, DDS will be showcasing digital innovations through a combination of sponsored live product presentations, hands-on workshops, discussion sessions, an exhibition and a printed guide, offering participants a dynamic and interactive education experience.

The show will be launched at the International Exponential in Milan, one of the most important events in the Italian dental industry, which will be held from 16 to 18 October. Online registration for dental professionals will soon open on the DDS website.

More information about the DDS is available online at www.digitaldentistryshow.com.

Alternative system for periodontitis classification presented

NEW YORK, USA: Conventionally, periodontal disease is classified as either chronic or aggressive based on clinical signs and symptoms. However, this method lacks an unequivocal, pathobiology-based foundation. Researchers at Columbia University Medical Center have thus developed a new system for classifying periodontal disease based on the genetic signature of affected tissue.

In a study involving 120 male and female nonsmokers ages 11 to 76 with periodontitis, the researchers found that molecular profiling of gingival tissue could form a basis for the development of an alternative classification for periodontitis, explained Dr Panos N. Papapanou, study author and professor of dental medicine at Columbia University in the City of New York.

Analysing genome expressions in the gingival tissue taken from the study participants, the researchers observed that patients fell into two distinct clusters. “However, the clusters did not align with the current classification of chronic and aggressive periodontitis,” Papapanou said. According to the study, patients in the second cluster showed a more extensive form of the disease. They were mostly male, matching with the well-established observation that severe periodontitis is more common in men than in women.

The researchers believe that a new system based on genetic analysis could offer significant advantages for classifying patients.

“If a patient is found to be highly susceptible to severe periodontitis, we would be justified in using aggressive therapies, although this person may have subclinical disease,” Papapanou said. “Today, we basically don’t know whether a periodontal infection is truly aggressive until severe, irreversible damage has occurred,” he added.

In the near future, the researchers plan to conduct a prospective study to validate the new classification system’s ability to predict disease outcomes.