“It is important for us to adapt our global projects to the culture in the Middle East”

Interview with Dr. Patrick Hescot, former President of the FDI European Regional Organization

By Dental Tribune MEA/CAPPmea

Dental Tribune MEA had the pleasure to interview Dr. Patrick Hescot, President of the FDI World Dental Federation who was present in Dubai last February in order to promote World Oral Health Day and celebrate FDI global partnership with Philips and to promote FDI 2016 in Poznan, Poland later this year (7-10 September). During the exclusive interview, Dr. Hescot shared his passion for prevention including the transfer of expertise to the regional dental societies around the Middle East region.

Dental Tribune MEA/CAPPmea: Dr. Patrick Hescot our pleasure to welcome you to the Philips booth at the AEEDC meeting here in Dubai where you are present to promote World Oral Health Day and FDI Annual World Dental Congress, amongst other things. Can you share a little bit about yourself?

Dr. Patrick Hescot: It is my pleasure to be here. First of all, we are here to stress the very importance of the teamwork surrounding the World Oral Health Day and how we can transfer our experience to the regional dental associations and societies. As you may know, before becoming the president of the FDI, I have been involved in the FDI work for over 20 years. I was the former President of the FDI European Regional Organization, served on the FDI council since 2007 and was designated President-Elect in 2013. Prevention has been a lifelong hobby of mine and I have had the pleasure to help the prevention campaigns for the French Dental Association in the last 20 years whilst further serving as an advisor to the French Ministry of Health.

FDI and Royal Philips recently signed a global agreement to promote the importance of oral health. Please share your views on the overall partnership and how you plan to transfer this to the Middle East region?

It is a pleasure to work with Philips whom I very much admire. We have welcomed them happily to our group of sponsors and supporters and once again congratulate them for demonstrating their commitment to the cause of global oral health awareness. The upcoming World Oral Health Day is a perfect example of the opportunity to position oral health where it belongs and to demonstrate the importance of prevention. Philips has a great product and I recommend their electric toothbrush as an essential aspect of maintaining a good oral health standard.

As an advocate of prevention, what is important for good oral health?

The main principle of the FDI has always been to promote oral health. It is important to prevent and maintain good oral health standards and this is what our programs are all about. The treatment stage is already too late, a good oral health lifestyle starts with our children in the schools, the parents, the families, and these are the people we need to educate on proper prevention. We have to create a new process of oral health and this process is about therapeutic education, maintenance and again prevention. We will be presenting this extensively at the upcoming FDI in Poznan where we aim to showcase the new definition of oral health. We welcome all dental professionals to attend the FDI Annual World Dental Congress between 27-10 September 2016 in Poland. The most important for each person is their own self-esteem which is greatly affected by their oral health. It is impossible to speak or live a good social life without good oral health.

What are the oral health challenges you come across most in dentistry today?

One of the most important problems is Peri Implants, one of the long-term risks associated with dental implants which is the infectious disease causing inflammation of the surrounding gums and bone of an already integrated dental implant which leads to the loss of supporting bone. FDI has a big focus on this problem as there are many patients nowadays with placed implants. The problem is caused not only by bad implants but also by improper dentistry and this is a condition which is becoming very dangerous and FDI has a focus to tackle this issue.

How is the FDI transferring the knowledge to dentistry in the Middle East?

It is important for us to adapt our global projects to the culture in the Middle East which differs from Europe. Through our trip here in Dubai, we have been able to meet and discuss with various dental societies and associations such as the Qatar, Omani and Saudi Dental Societies the very importance of our programs and how they can carry these out in their own countries. Through the expertise and toolkits the regional dental societies can educate their populations in their respective countries. That is what the World Oral Health Day is all about. It is our duty to provide dentistry in the region with the right tools to get the messages across through promotion with an end goal to improve the oral health of the children and the families.

What are some of the examples of the toolkits for WOHD?

There are various opportunities, in Europe we work a lot at the schools, it is very important to educate children at a young age who will communicate with the parents and the families. Through activations at the schools, events on the streets and within the dental practices there are numerous possibilities for the regional dental associations to campaign for a healthier smile, a healthier life. We have shared our papers, posters, documents and toolkits which are used globally during this global World Oral Health Day. It is a pleasure to see that several countries have gone beyond and organized entire dental weeks in their respective countries.

Thank you Dr. Patrick Hescot for your informative feedback. We wish you lots of success at the upcoming congress in Poznan, Poland between 07-10 September 2016.