

POSTER ABSTRACT

Where the Mind Meets the Mouth – an integrated and collaborative health care approach

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Background: The majority of the cost of oral health care in Australia is borne by individuals, hence many miss out on early, cost-effective care. 63,000 Australians are hospitalised annually for preventable oral conditions. Current approaches separate the provision of oral from general health care. Australia's National Oral Health Plan recognises oral health as everyone's business and a role for health care workers and carers to intervene early in oral disease.

Objectives: To present an innovative approach to primary oral health care focussed on patient centred care, workforce reorientation, health promotion and prevention and the integration of oral and general health.

Methods: North Richmond Community Health (NRCH), an inner urban community health service, in Victoria, Australia, through developing an innovative oral health program, has also developed a conference series Where the Mind Meets the Mouth WMMM (www.wheremindmeetsmouth.com.au) to inform the integration of oral health and general health. In 2015 the inaugural conference explored significant social determinants in oral and general health, such as substance use, mental illness and family violence. In 2016, the second conference, Putting the Mouth back into the Body, examined common risk factors for oral and general diseases, and working with other health professionals (eg. doctors, pharmacists, nurses).

Results: WMMM has raised awareness amongst health professionals of the impact of oral health on general health and vice versa. A national research network committed to integration of oral and general health has been established, and a model of diabetes management that includes oral health has been proposed for trial. Conversations about Care, 2018, places the consumer at the centre of informing integrated health care provision.

Martin; Where the Mind Meets the Mouth – an integrated and collaborative health care approach

Conclusion: By responding to community needs, encouraging dialogue and sharing between consumers, health professionals and carers, we can truly collaborate in the delivery of primary preventive integrated health care, bringing the mind, body and mouth together.

Keywords: oral health; integration; prevention; patient centred care; consumer experience
