



Current challenges in dental public health and the (un)beneficial cut-back of funding

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Abstract:

At times where diseases such as Ebola, novel Coronavirus and other infectious disease outbreaks hold the news headlines, public health dentistry matters seem to be insignificant and currently too small for any kind of media. Even more so, it must be mentioned that dental public health measures - whether in the area of prevention or similar do matter quite a bit. Teeth are painful when we get them, then we lose them, and even more so with issues. The current developments in nutrition including the increased soda consumption has accelerated caries and other dental problems. A varying degree of dental hygiene, dental awareness along with often required out-of-pocket dental related spending due to too expensive dental health insurance schemes have led to increased dental and gum problems. Now, these issues do not only occur among less socio-economic privileged, but also among the wealthier population. Dental care spending is still perceived a luxury and done only when really needed, rather than an investment in the overall individual wellbeing to minimize ground for infections. This trend is observed across the globe with nutrition being less natural. The notion taking dental health for granted leads to cut-back of related public health measures funding due to no quick impact and thus, no real benefit being visible to current decision-makers and politicians. What might seem an unnecessary spending on the public dental health today, will back-fire over time in the future as multiple infections based in the mouth/teeth and a potentially weakened human immune system.



Biography:

Dr. Erika Wichro is an Austrian Medical Doctor, Public Health Expert and Humanitarian Emergency & Development (SDGs) Consultant with over 15 years of national and international clinical, medical and public health work experience in several programs of different countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey for Syria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Zambia, the Pacific region and Austria for WHO and other organizations. Her capacities span across several sectors including management, economics, research, bioethics, international law, training, and more. She also served as a consultant in various capacities across the globe and is part of the trained expert pool of the European Union Civil Protection mechanism. Dr. Wichro is a trainer in the Course of Negotiation and Decision-Making and the High-Level Coordination. She recently published on the psychosocial care needs in Syria in the August 2018 edition of the Crisis Response Journal. She is passionate about linking academics, policy-making, management and field operations through consulting services to strengthening communities' multi-disciplinary capabilities and resilience.

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