



RWANDA DENTAL ASSOCIATION (RDA)

Feb 20th , 2013

Rationale and organization of 1st International Oral Health Conference in Rwanda, March 1-2, 2013

Through the Ministry of Health, Rwanda Dental Association (RDA) is organizing the 1st international oral health conference which will take place at Serena Hotel-Kigali, from the 1st - 2nd March 2013. The theme of the conference is *“Exploring the Oral Health System in Rwanda: Policy, Science, training & Practice”*.

Rwanda dental association has organized this conference in a context of bringing together oral health experts and others oral health professionals to share scientific knowledge, skills and experiences on oral health related aspects, giving resolutions and policies that will contribute to the promotion of oral health in Rwanda. This conference will lay the foundation upon which oral health program will be built.

Rwanda dental association is aged than more 18years, since its creation to nowadays the association sounds as if does not exist, and even patients do not have enough information of what he(he) suffering, of who to consult and where to find a qualified dentist:

This may be justified by the followings challenges:

- ✚ Few numbers of qualified professionals: Actually the association counts a total of 11 dentists' countryside, among these only 1 has a master's degree level; and 17 dentists foreigners whose contribute much on the promotion of oral health in Rwanda. As the population of Rwanda is 11million people, this shows that 1 dentist for one million people which is completely opposite with the standards of world health Organization (WHO).
- ✚ Lack of the Oral health policy and a dental officer at the Ministerial level: this also contributed and even became a big challenge for the association to trace the way forward of its fixed objectives in terms of developing the profession and promotion of oral health of Rwandans.
- ✚ Illegal practice: since its existence the association was not able to stop and punish people who practice illegally because was not a member of medical council which has that power to arrest and take into court people who practices medicines illegally. This has resulted into serious complications and even death of the patients. The most illegal practices observed were; Traditional extraction of primary teeth buds with its known

complications (Ibyinyo); Cut of Uvula(Ikilimi), Fractures of mandibles due to extractions of teeth by unqualified people; ..etc

- ✚ Lack of knowledge on oral diseases by the population and how to prevent them: this constitutes the problem of public health issues because good oral health status reflects good general health body. Oral health education is key point in the prevention of oral diseases.

OBJECTIVES OF THE 1ST INTERNATIONAL ORAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Given the fact that oral health is the mirror of the general health body status, it is important that having healthy oral cavity should also reflect the health of the rest parts of the body. In this two day event, participants will exchange knowledge, skills and experiences on the promotions of oral health, policies, the updates of new and innovative dental technologies to keep updated and serve better our patients needs. Rwandans will be informed about dental diseases, how to treat and prevent them at the early stage of the diseases.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- a) To highlight recommendable mechanisms to promote oral health of Rwandans
- b) To collaborate with the ministry of health to set a harmonized oral health policy of Rwanda people.
- c) To share experiences and appropriate strategies to prevent illegal dental practice in Rwanda.
- d) For Rwanda association members to learn from others experiences for fast promotion of the profession.
- e) To encourage young Rwandan people to pursue studies in dentistry and other to go for their master studies.
- f) To provide oral health education among the Rwandan people.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- ✓ To promote oral health of Rwanda by providing oral health education as a key point.
- ✓ To combine energies with medical and dentist council in establishment of mechanisms; this will stop and or prevent practice of illegal dentistry among Rwandans.
- ✓ To develop dental profession by partnership with other international dental professions and exchanges knowledge on news technology.
- ✓ To increase the number of citizen professionals by supporting young Rwandans who wish to pursue studies in dentistry.
- ✓ To play a role in the training of dental students.
- ✓ To have an advocacy and dental officer in charge of oral health at the Ministry of health.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FIRST EVER ORAL HEALTH CONFERENCE IN RWANDA 1&2 MARCH 2013

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Recognition of dental professional is low: law is recommended and appreciated, it will empower oral health professionals to serve Rwandans in a professional and ethical manner
2. Because oral health has not been given priority in terms of policy, strategic planning, this has resulted inadequate funding, human resources and infrastructure development including absence of dental school. The consequences of this are late diagnosis of oral disease and conditions, inadequate human resources and facilities and non-existent supply and maintenance chain for consumables and equipment to offer quality oral health services to the population. Oral health has been given a low priority in terms of human resources, materials,
3. Management of pediatric oral health was recognized to be a neglected. It is affected by social cultural believes and limited understanding to the point that oral health care of children has been delegated to traditional healers and among professional there is limited understanding of child psychological management of child patient.
4. Clinical guidelines are positive step in improving the quality of oral health care.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. In order to sustain this positive step, the profession must be embraced performance based practice and financing to ensure oral health service delivery and sustainability.
2. Oral health professionals must empower themselves to meet the oral health needs in a sustainable cost effective and efficient manner
3. Integrate oral health education in Mother and Child clinics so as to prevent preterm delivery and low birth weight which is caused by periodontal diseases
4. There is an urgent need to establish a dental school in Rwanda and a plan to upgrade the available dental personnel into the levels of masters in different areas of dentistry especially oral and maxillofacial surgery.
5. To form s committee to discuss PBF in oral health in Rwanda
6. Oral health should be incorporated into health policy and integrated into the HSSP as NCD in line with WHO recommendations
7. Oral health education should be incorporated during antenatal, immunization visits and in the school curricula.
8. Oral health education should be incorporated into the subject matters offered by community health workers at the level of community and Umudugudu.
9. In order to ensure effective implementation of the clinical guidelines it is recommended that
 - a. Oral health focal person be appointed at the ministry of health

- b. Only professionally qualified oral health person are appointed to implement guidelines
 - c. Oral health focal point to be appointed at level of the district to advice on
 - i. To determine the quality of material of dental materials and equipment
 - ii. Ensure monitoring and evaluation of the implantation of the clinical guidelines
 - iii. Identification of non-qualified practitioners.
10. Oral health professionals should be responsible for identifying and purchasing equipment and consumables relevant for oral health.

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