



Editorial

Oral health Promotion: Are we doing it right?

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Oral health promotion is a key public health action areas that aims increase individuals control over their own oral health. It includes education, training and resources to achieve better outcomes. There are many oral health promotion initiatives across the globe. One of the most famous initiatives is World Oral Health Day organized by the World Federation Dentaire (FDI) on 20 March every year. Over the past few years, many dental organizations and institutions celebrated the world oral health day by launching health education and promotion campaigns targeting schoolchildren. Although the intentions were decent to raise oral health awareness, such activities appeared to have little effect on oral public health in Libya.

First, the campaigns can contribute to widening oral health inequalities among Libyan since most of them targeted private schools. The main reason for this, as mentioned by some organizers, is that it is easy to access private schools. Therefore, these mistargeted oral health campaigns will eventually improve the oral health among affluent (who have better oral health resources) and ignore oral health promotion among their worse off counterparts studying in state-run schools. The social gradient in oral health is well documented globally and locally in several recently published theses and conference presentations.¹⁻⁴

Second, most of campaigns were focusing on dental caries and ignore other oral health problems such dental traumatic injuries, fluorosis, dentine hypersensitivity, dental neglect and Molar-Incisor Hypomineralisation which are relatively prevalent.⁵⁻⁹ These conditions can have significant impact on the quality of life and should be targeted in the future oral health campaigns. Moreover, the immediate management of conditions such as trauma requires the involvement of those who provides the first aid at the site of injury. Several studies have highlighted the insufficient oral health related

knowledge among parents, teachers and sports coaches.¹⁰ Therefore, it is highly recommended that future oral health campaigns expand their target groups to include different age groups, settings and planned in a way that ensures fulfilling the community needs and reducing inequalities in oral health.

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