

REPORT OF WORLD ORAL HEALTH DAY 2017

Dr Veronica Dinyain, Consultant Dental Surgeon & Assistant Editor NDMJ

INTRODUCTION:

World Oral Health Day is celebrated globally every year on 20 March and is organized by FDI (World Dental Federation). World Oral Health Day was launched in 2013 to raise awareness of the importance of good oral health and its significance in safeguarding general health and well-being. This was done through an international awareness campaign created and launched by FDI, adapted and promoted locally by national dental associations in over 140 countries worldwide.

The World Oral Health day 2017 was celebrated in Bayelsa state by the Nigerian Dental Association in collaboration with the Nigerian Medical Association Bayelsa State chapter on the 20th of March, 2017 with the theme "*Live mouth smart*".

The activities spanned from the 18th to the 23rd of March 2017 and included talk shows on radio and television, road walk and oral health campaign as well as free dental check-up and treatment in three centers:

1. The Federal Medical Centre Yenagoa
2. The Dental Centre, Niger Delta University Teaching Hospital Okolobiri
3. The Dental Clinic, Diete Koki Memorial Hospital Yenagoa

The oral health campaign took place in Ogboloma, Okolobiri, Obunagha and finally ended in Tombia market in Etegwe all in Yenagoa local government area.

The talk shows took place in Royal FM 95.5 Agudama- Epie Yenagoa, on Saturday 18th of March 2017 while the television program took place in the Nigerian Television Authority Yenagoa on the 23rd of March 2017.

Brief history of the world oral health day celebration

WOHD was officially launched in 2007 and was

originally celebrated on 12 September, the birth date of FDI founder Dr Charles Godon. However, the campaign was not fully activated until 2013, when further to a decision by FDI's General Assembly (governing body) in September 2012 the date was changed¹ to 20th March 2017.

. The main reason for this change is to avoid conflict with FDI's World Dental Congress which took place during the same period.

The new date of was chosen to reflect that:

- Seniors must have a total of 20 natural teeth at the end of their life to be considered healthy
 - Children should possess 20 baby teeth
 - Healthy adults must have a total of 32 teeth and 0 dental cavities
- Expressed on a numerical basis this can be translated as 3/20 hence March 20

Previous campaign themes:

- 2013: *Healthy Teeth for a Healthy Life*
- 2014: *Celebrating Healthy Smiles*
- 2015: *Smile for Life*
- 2016: *Healthy mouth, Healthy body.*

World Health Day is one of eight official Global Health campaigns marked by WHO, along with World Tuberculosis Day, World Immunization Week, World Malaria Day, World No Tobacco Day, World AIDS Day, World Blood Donor Day, and World Hepatitis Day.²

Aim of the program

The main aim is to raise awareness of oral health issues so that governments, health associations and the general public can work together to achieve healthier mouths, and happier lives.

Secondarily to reduce tooth decay and to raise awareness to better oral health seeking behavior

To celebrate the benefits of a healthy mouth and to promote worldwide awareness of the issues around oral health as well as the importance of looking after oral hygiene to everyone old and young³.

Staff:

A total number of 9 dental surgeons and 7 dental therapists, 10 dental surgery assistants and 3 dental technologists took part in the program.

Patients seen:

One hundred and sixty nine patients were treated during this program comprising 89 (52.6%) men and 80 (47.3%) women. While the figure appears large, it is pertinent to note that the patients were spread over a couple of days due to the small number of Dental Surgeons and Therapists as well as the availability of dental chairs

The mean age of the men was 36.8 ± 11.39 years, and that of the women was 33.8 ± 14.7 years. About 50% of those treated had their teeth extracted as a result of Dental caries and Periodontal diseases while 77 (49.5%) had scaling and polishing done.

Only 8 (4.7%) of the patients; 5 men and 3 women had restorative treatment done.

During the interactions in the communities, we discovered that a lot of them were ignorant of the causes of oral diseases for instance; they still believe that dental caries was caused by worms.

They were also not aware of the various treatment options available to them as most of them felt that every carious tooth must be extracted.

The other major problem was lack of adequate resources.

Currently, facilities for proper oral health care are only available in two out of the eight local government areas of Bayelsa state and even these facilities need to be upgraded

It is hoped that, the government of Bayelsa state should as a matter of urgency, open up more, well equipped dental centres in all the local government areas as well as renovate and equip the old ones with modern equipment

Conclusion

The World Oral Health Day 2017 has come and gone. It is hoped that the government will rise up to its responsibilities of making oral health care affordable and readily accessible to the people of Bayelsa state.

Acknowledgement

I wish to express my profound gratitude to:
The Medical Director, Federal Medical Centre,

Yenagoa, The Chief Medical Director, Niger Delta university Teaching Hospital, Okolobiri, Unilever Nigeria PLC and Glaxosmithkline Nigeria PLC

REFERENCES

1. World Oral Health Day 20 March 2017 at www.worldoralhealthday.org/about Accessed 1st May 2017
2. World Health Organization Global Health days <http://www.who.int/campaigns/en/> Accessed 1st May 2017
3. World Oral Health Day . <http://www.worldoralhealthday.com> Accessed 1st May 2017