

Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future (ACFF) Seventh Annual Summit Calls for Interdisciplinary Collaboration to Drive Outcomes in Oral Health

Celebrates Establishing 26 Local Chapters Worldwide

Poznań, Poland, 8 September 2016 – The [Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future \(ACFF\)](#) held its seventh annual summit at the FDI World Dental Congress, delivering a report on the ACFF and evolving a critical conversation around collaborations in oral health and how interdisciplinary efforts can advance caries prevention and management globally and locally. The panel agreed that the “Caries Puzzle” – introduced by the ACFF at its Symposium held at the UAE International Dental Conference in Dubai (AEEDC) earlier this year – is the comprehensive approach needed to lead the way towards a cavity-free future for all. The session also provided an in-depth look at the Central Eastern European (CEE) and Polish ACFF Chapters that have implemented a wealth of activities in the region since the launch of the CEE Chapter in 2014.

Support for the “Caries Puzzle”

The concept of the “Caries Puzzle” proposes that organized collaboration and synergy is needed to effectively “join up” existing evidence regarding the current approach to caries prevention and control. Elements of the puzzle include: nutrition (sugar); education (behavior change); cariology (enabling prevention); public health (policy & practice); clinical practice (strategy); ICCMS™ Caries Management (4D System); action for health professionals; and action for public, patients and others. The approach was developed to address the fact dental caries is a complex, multifactorial disease that cannot be prevented by a traditional focus on single factors in isolation. More details can be found on the [ACFF website](#).

Spotlight on Central Eastern European and Polish ACFF Chapters

“It’s very exciting to be surrounded by oral health leaders, advocates and members of the community for this important discussion started by the ACFF nearly eight years ago about how to eradicate the burden of caries worldwide,” said, Urszula Kaczmarek, Central Europe Eastern ACFF Chapter Chair, Department Head, Department of Conservative Dentistry and Paediatric Dentistry, Medical University of Wroclaw, Poland.

During the Summit, Prof. Kaczmarek called for greater education and prevention efforts in Poland as results from a cross-country consumer survey showed respondents in Poland reported less tooth brushing combined with a higher intake of sugar compared to other European countries.

“The Polish ACFF Chapter is excited to continue working hand-in-hand with an ever growing assembly of our fellow ACFF Chapters in nearly every corner of the world towards achieving a cavity-free future, both in our country and worldwide,” said Prof. Kaczmarek.

Global Synergy & Evidenced-Based Public Communication

Dr. Marco Mazevet, Immediate Past President of the European Dental Students’ Association, reinforced the need to achieve synergy from the work of all the different, but equally important, stakeholders in the area of effective caries prevention and management. “Prevention is complex,”

he said. “We have to look into all aspects, not just from single disciplines, and identify the gaps in each country: think globally, act locally. However, the message to the patient and the general public needs to be evidence based, but very simple.”

As one of the means to help communicate these simple messages to the public, a number of organizations, including the *ACFF* and Colgate-Palmolive, have partnered to create World Cavity-Free-Future Day which will launch on October 14. The initiative aims to engage communities across the globe via community outreach events, free oral care consultations, professional webinars and school-based education efforts and more.

Continued Expansion of *ACFF* Worldwide

Since its official global launch in 2010 at the FDI World Dental Congress in Brazil, the *ACFF* has founded local Chapters in regions across the globe, spanning Asia, Europe, Central and Latin America, Australasia and Africa. Today, the 26 *ACFF* Chapters drive diverse and regionally tailored programs including, but not limited to, expanding dental school curriculums; promoting community-based educational programs, building an expansive library of communications resources including educational materials for professionals and families; implementing integrated, comprehensive and locally appropriate caries prevention and management systems and monitoring approaches; and bridging the gap between oral health and overall health through educational efforts dedicated to issues such as the global rise in sugar consumption, for example.

“Each year the *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future* gathers at the FDI Annual World Dental Congress to reflect on achievements in advancing oral health efforts worldwide, to debate the most pressing existing challenges and recharge our efforts in the global fight against caries,” said Dr. Nigel Pitts, Global Chairman of the *ACFF*, and Director of the Dental Innovation and Translation Centre, King’s College London Dental Institute. “A growing area of interest of the *ACFF* has been that of collaboration to reach a common mission in oral health and the FDI is symbolic of the very collaboration and exchange of thoughts, research and best practices, which will be critical for fulfilling the mission of the *ACFF* and overcoming dental caries - one of the most significant public health issues affecting our society today.”

For more information about the work of the *ACFF*, please visit our [website](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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About the *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future (ACFF)*

The [Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future](#), a non-profitable charitable organization, is a group of worldwide leading dental experts who have joined forces to help implement changes to dental health practices across the globe. The aim of the *Alliance* is to promote initiatives to stop the development and progression of tooth decay in order to move towards a Cavity-Free Future for everyone. To achieve this goal, the *Alliance* believes that collaborative action is required to raise awareness of dental caries (tooth decay) and positively influence people’s dental health habits.

Colgate-Palmolive Company is a supporter of the *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future*; the company supports improved oral health through its partnerships with the dental profession and government and public health agencies.

About Caries

Worldwide, 60-90% of school children and nearly 100% of adults have dental caries.ⁱ In fact, caries (which includes all stages of tooth decay) is the most common, yet preventable chronic disease on the planet.ⁱⁱ

When dental caries occurs, hard tissue in the tooth is damaged by acids that naturally exist in our mouth and help break down foods, which results in tooth decay. Early dental caries can be prevented and controlled if the multiple causative factors, namely a susceptible tooth surface, the presence of cariogenic acid producing bacteria in dental plaque biofilm, and the exposure to ingested sugars, are reduced.

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REFERENCES

ⁱ World Health Organization

ⁱⁱ Oral Health Atlas, FDI World Dental Federation