

Principles and Practice of Public Health Dentistry

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To
My Parents, wife Thanuja and my son Aniketh
—Madhusudan Krishna

My Parents
—Pralhad L Dasar

Preface

It has been our earnest endeavor to write a comprehensive yet brief book on the vast subject of Public Health Dentistry.

Early in the infancy of this book, it became quite apparent that one person could not assimilate the vast literature on this subject. But the apparent isolation of chapters and the fragmentation of materials from various authors was an issue sorted out by careful reviews and critical evaluation.

During the past 50 years, there has been an increasing amount of information available on the very broad discipline known as 'Preventive and Community Dentistry', a name fast becoming obsolete and being replaced more aptly and precisely by 'Public Health Dentistry'. Very too often undergraduate students are unaware of the scientific basis of 'dental camps' or the purpose of the various 'indices' exercise they are made to carry out without having proper background knowledge of epidemiology and surveying techniques. So, a critical evaluation is included to give a more objective view of the various dental indices used.

The contents of the book are so arranged to prevent fragmentation and compartmentalization of knowledge and provide the reader a logical and rational approach to the subject to make it an exciting learning experience.

In the western countries, there has been a dramatic decline in dental caries in the past 25 years, whereas in developing countries such as ours, it is steadily on the rise due to many factors including rapid changes in dietary habits. For this reason, extensive coverage has been made on the topic of preventive dentistry. Further, the huge problem of oral cancer hangs like the proverbial '*Damocles sword*' on our heads. Early detection and prevention of the problem is the basic duty of a Public Health Dentist, or for that matter even a general dental practitioner, in reducing the ravages of pain and death.

In recent years, the topic of Forensic Dentistry is gaining vast importance, especially for a public health dentist working in the field. The branch has superceded all previous superficial borders and is now seen as a science on its own. A chapter on this topic has therefore been included to provide the reader an in-depth knowledge of the subject. Further recognizing the role of public health dentist in Anthropology, a chapter on Dental Anthropology is included. Also we have tried to provide justice to such subjects as Computers in Dentistry and Evidence-based Dental Research which is fast becoming the purview of the dental surgeon, just as any health-service provider.

The book is divided into two sections based on the title and each section is further divided into units to facilitate easy understanding and to ensure depth in work, continuity and logical presentation.

Any endeavor in collecting and presenting such a vast body of knowledge is bound to be fraught with unforeseen errors. Though there are a good many books on this particular subject, it is our hope that this one competes with the very best.

We request our readers to fill in with any kind of constructive criticism, which we are ready to receive humbly.

**Madhusudan Krishna
Pralhad L Dasar**

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Many individuals have contributed, assisted, nurtured, and guided us in writing this book. As aptly elucidated by the *Sanskrit subhashita*, 'Just as a thread reaches the God through the flower, so also a man acquires distinction in the company of noble gentlemen'. Indeed it has been very exciting right from arranging the author- contributor coordinating sessions to the editing of the final manuscript.

The authors wish to place on record the guidance, encouragement and sometimes the critical scrutiny by their teacher, mentor, friend and philosopher Dr. K.V.V Prasad, Head of Department, Department of Preventive and Community Dentistry, SDM College of Dental Sciences, Dharwad.

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Contents

PART 1: PRINCIPLES

SECTION 1: PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Concepts of Public Health	5
2. Health and Disease	17
3. Environment and Public Health	32
4. Health Care and Health Administration in India	96

SECTION 2: EPIDEMIOLOGY

5. General Principles and Methods of Epidemiology	69
6. Dental Epidemiological Methods	88
7. Epidemiology and Etiology of Oral Diseases	124

SECTION 3: HEALTH RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

8. Dental Research Methodology	187
9. Evidence-based Dental Research	207
10. Computers in Dentistry	213

PART 2: PRACTICE

SECTION 4: DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

11. Concept of Dental Public Health	229
12. Planning and Evaluation of Dental Public Health Programs	241
13. Dental Care Payment Systems	251
14. Dental Manpower	256
15. Dental Ethics	267
16. Dental Health Education	276
17. School Dental Health Education	294
18. Atraumatic Restorative Treatment	302

SECTION 5: PREVENTIVE DENTISTRY

19. Concepts of Preventive Dentistry	311
20. Oral Health Promotion	314
21. Prevention of Dental Diseases	322
22. Fluorides in Preventive Dentistry	350
23. Pit and Fissure Sealants	392
24. Plaque Control	397
25. Dental Caries Vaccines	431

SECTION 6: BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

26. . Sociology and Oral Health	443
27. . Dental Anthropology	458

SECTION 7: HEALTH AGENCIES

28. . International Health Agencies	477
29. . Global Oral Health Goals for 2020	480
30. . Dental Council of India and Indian Dental Association	482

UNIT 8: MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

31. . Caries Activity and Susceptibility Tests	493
32. . Forensic Dentistry and Case Studies in Dental Anthropology	496
33. . Primary Oral Health Care Approach	521
34. . Dentist Act-1948	527
35. . Nutrition and Oral Health	532
. <i>Appendices</i>	547
. <i>Index</i>	557