

From the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Dental Hygiene*

Over the last 30 years, we have learned much about the etiology, progression, and treatment of periodontal diseases. For example, we know that the accumulation of dental biofilm can trigger resultant inflammatory and immune responses. Dental biofilm contains a vast diversity of microbial species, some of which have been identified as etiologic agents for systemic diseases.

Risk factors for periodontitis can be grouped into categories such as microbial, systemic, behavioral, and local. Controlling risk factors is important to the management of periodontal diseases and is something that should be an overall goal for every dental hygienist. One risk factor for disease that can be controlled in the majority of cases is dental biofilm. However, control of dental biofilm is dependent on many factors including the knowledge of the dental hygienist regarding evidence-based strategies for disease prevention and treatment.

We have an extensive amount of scientific evidence available to educate every oral health care professional about periodontal diseases. However, dental practice management experts report that many clinicians are not adequately diagnosing, documenting, or monitoring disease status or making treatment recom-

mendations to patients based on evidence-based strategies. Many questions arise about the best treatment techniques, products, and recommendations for patients who have chronic periodontitis or are at risk for the disease. The patient is dependent on the dental hygienist to be at the forefront of prevention. It is vital for dental hygienists to have up-to-date, accurate information so they can educate and make appropriate recommendations for the individual patient.

This supplement of the *Journal of Dental Hygiene* includes articles that will educate every dental hygienist about the evidence base for treatment of chronic periodontitis. Dr. Charles Cobb is an international expert on dental biofilm and the effect of nonsurgical methods for removing biofilm and hard deposits (calculus) on the tooth and root surfaces. He provides a comprehensive, evidence-based review of what dental hygienists can expect from nonsurgical therapies. Drs. David Paquette and Maria Ryan, 2 world-renowned periodontists, and I present a comprehensive paper on the evidence base for the use of locally delivered antimicrobials. Since their inception 3 decades ago, oral health care professionals have been utilizing locally delivered antimicrobials/antibiotics to treat chronic peri-

odontitis. Still, questions arise about their utility and ability to treat and control this disease. This paper presents the clinical evidence for use of locally delivered antimicrobials in patient care. Finally, Dr. Larry Sweeting, Ms. Karen Davis, and Dr. Charles Cobb put the evidence into an action plan for dental hygienists. Dr. Sweeting and Ms. Davis are dental clinicians as well as professional speakers and consultants. Their paper discusses the effectiveness of using a Periodontal Treatment Protocol to assist in the early diagnosis and treatment of periodontal diseases. It also discusses insurance coding, vital verbal skills to use with patients, and considerations for implementation of locally delivered antimicrobials into a general clinical practice.

I want to extend sincere appreciation to OraPharma, Inc. for their support of this supplement. OraPharma, Inc. has been diligent in their goal of conducting evidence-based scientific investigations in order to help all oral health care professionals better diagnose and treat periodontal diseases.

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