

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



The incidence of diabetes mellitus is increasing at an alarming rate. It is estimated that 23.6 million people in the United States have diabetes mellitus and another 57 million are estimated to have prediabetes. Every dental hygienist in clinical practice encounters patients who are either diagnosed with diabetes mellitus or are undiagnosed but are on the verge of having the disease. It is becoming increasingly important for all dental hygienists to stay abreast of the latest research about diabetes and know how to properly identify, treat and refer patients who present with this medical condition.

Several papers have been written regarding the potential bidirectional relationship of diabetes and periodontal disease.^{1,2} Both diabetes mellitus and periodontal diseases are chronic inflammatory disorders and both affect millions of people worldwide. Evidence suggests that diabetes is a risk factor for increased gingivitis and periodontitis. Conversely, investigators have reported reduced glycemic control in patients who have diabetes and chronic periodontitis.

Collaboration between oral care and medical providers to treat patients with diabetes is an area where dental hygienists can play a key role. Health care providers from disciplines such as Pharmacy, Podiatry, Optometry, Dentistry, Cardiology, Endocrinology and others can work together to provide an interdisciplinary approach to treatment that will benefit the patient's overall health.

This supplement to the *Journal of Dental Hygiene* is unique in that it is co-authored by an interdisciplinary group of healthcare professionals. Dr. JoAnn Gurenlian is a dental hygienist who has a vast array of experience in the fields of dentistry and medicine. Dr. Ball, an optometrist serves as Vice Chair of the Pharmacy, Podiatry, Optometry, and Dental Professionals (PPOD) Work Group of the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP). Dr. Fontaine, a Podiatrist, is in academic medicine in Texas and a member of the PPOD Work Group

of the NDEP. The authors share information about the interdisciplinary needs of patients with diabetes mellitus.

Finally, I want to extend tremendous thanks to the Colgate-Palmolive Company for their support of this supplement. Colgate-Palmolive is committed to providing high quality oral care products and current scientific information for dental professionals throughout the world.

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