For more information on the curriculum project and how you can help bridge the gap between medicine and dentistry, contact:

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The Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Manitoba want to thank the Manitoba government for providing the educational grant to support the development of this innovative curriculum.
Traditionally, healthcare providers (HCPs) have seen oral health as something that fell under the domain of dentists and dental hygienists. The truth is, there’s growing evidence that suggests that a person’s oral health and overall health are interrelated and that physicians, nurses and other non-dental HCPs haven’t been educated about oral diseases or trained to examine the oral cavity. The Oral-Systemic Health Education for Non-Dental Healthcare Providers curriculum is the first comprehensive plan to bridge this gap in health science education.

The potential impact of the curriculum in addressing co-morbid diseases associated with the oral cavity can’t be understated. Given the appropriate education and training, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians, speech pathologists and other non-dental HCPs could impact the epidemiologic trends in services that have been traditionally provided by dentists and dental hygienists. This curriculum provides physicians, nurses and other non-dental HCPs the knowledge base and tools they need to properly screen and refer patients at risk for oral diseases and to collaborate with oral HCPs in co-managing patients in high-risk categories.

Based on the recommendations of the advisory board, the curriculum was expanded to 30 individual courses. As a whole, these courses constitute the first comprehensive curriculum on oral-systemic health for non-dental HCPs that is evidence-based, interprofessionally vetted and authored by the world’s leading authorities on subjects defined in the various courses.

An Innovation Long Overdue

Planning and Developing a Comprehensive Curriculum

In 2007, visionaries of the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Manitoba created the blueprint for a curriculum that aimed to increase the awareness of the significance of oral health within non-dental related professions. Guided by an advisory board of 50 experts from professions ranging from dentistry, dental hygiene, pharmacy, dietetics and human nutritional science, nursing, physician assistants, respiratory therapy, medicine, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, and psychology, the blueprint for the curriculum went through various iterations over a 14-month period. Board members provided valuable input on the relevancy of the curriculum to various non-dental professions, helped to prioritize the oral health topics most important to non-dental HCPs and reviewed learning objectives to ensure they were applicable to various healthcare professions.

State-of-the-Art Course Formats

The courses within the curriculum are offered in both journal grade hard copy as well as interactive online courses at www.oralhealthed.com with clinical photographs, medical illustrations, 3D animations, and videos.

The End Game: Medical-Dental Collaboration

Independent research suggests that 88 percent of physicians and 92 percent of pharmacists believe they don’t have enough information on oral-systemic interrelationships, and if they knew more about this area of medical science, they may start to refer patients to dentists. The hope is that this curriculum will achieve great strides in helping HCPs from around the world reconnect the mouth to the rest of the body.
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