WHO says women need better health care

Daniel Zimmermann

HONG KONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: The World Health Organization (WHO) has stressed the need to improve health care for women, especially those services pertaining to key stages of life, such as adolescence and older age. According to a new report by the organisation, lack of access to education, decision-making positions and income limit women’s ability to protect their own health and that of their families. Policy change and action is needed within the health sector and beyond to remove these barriers, WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan said.

According to Dr Chan, women provide between 80 and 90 per cent of health care worldwide, whether in the home or as nurses, but rarely receive the care they need themselves. For example, in many countries sexual and reproductive health services tend to focus exclusively on married women. Few services also cater for marginalised groups of women, such as sex workers, intravenous drug users, ethnic minorities and rural women.

Although considered to be ‘male problems’, heart attacks and strokes are two leading, global causes of death of women—who often exhibit different symptoms from men.

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To the Editor

Re: Editorial, (Dental Tribune Asia Pacific No. 8, Vol. 7, page 4)

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The WHO report seeks to identify key areas for reform both within and outside the health sector, including improving health systems to better meet women's needs throughout their lives, as well as leveraging changes in public policy to address and monitor the ways social and economic determinants of health adversely affect women. It points out that strategies to improve women's health care must take full account of gender inequality and address the specific socio-economic and cultural barriers that prevent women from protecting and improving their health.

“It's time to pay girls and women back, to make sure that they get the care and support they need to enjoy a fundamental human right at every moment of their lives, that is their right to health,” Dr Chan said.
Scientists in Germany develop hybrid composite for endodontics

The material, which was developed in collaboration with researchers from VOVO GmbH, a German manufacturer of dental restorative materials, is based on organic-inorganic hybrid substances called ORMOCERs that are combined with various nano- and micro-particles. While standard materials shrink by 2 to 4 per cent, ORMOCERs only shrink by 1.3 per cent as they harden. They can also be adapted to adhere to the different parts of the tooth, the researchers said.

ORMOCERS are already used in optical functional coatings for glass and ceramic components and easy-to-clean coatings for metals and leather. According to ISC officials, a final product for dentistry will be launched in a few years.

New York meeting installs new chairman

The Greater New York Dental Meeting has elected Dr John R Halikias as new chairman for the years 2010 and 2011. He will lead the organisation in its effort to continue the GNYDM’s mission of fostering lifelong learning for dental professionals and providing enormous sales opportunities for the dental industry, meeting officials told Dental Tribune America in New York.

Halikias will accept his honour after he was unanimously elected by the GNYDM Organization Committee.

Halikias has served the GNYDM for more than 25 years while also being president of the Second District Dental Society, one of the sponsors of the meeting. He learned his dental degree from the New York College of Dentistry in 1985. He is also a member of the American Dental Association, New York State Dental Association, American College of Dentistry and Hellenic Dental Society, and is a fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry. He currently practices general dentistry with his father, Dr Robert Halikias, in Brooklyn, NY.

As the largest dental convention, exposition and congress in the United States, the meeting continues to attract more than 57,000 attendees including 17,000 dentists from all US states and 118 countries.

A researcher produces laboratory samples based on the new material. (DTI/Photo courtesy of Fraunhofer ISC)