“There is much to learn from our Korean colleagues”

An interview with IAPD president Dr Jorge Luis Castillo, Peru

The Koreans did a great job with putting together an outstanding scientific programme in which all the main issues in paediatric dentistry were presented. I think that everyone who attended this excellent meeting will remember it for a long time.

Sedation and early caries prevention were two of the main topics discussed during the congress. What progress has been achieved in these two fields over the last two years, and what new information was communicated in the presentations?

With the most important researchers and clinicians in both areas present, these two topics were discussed comprehensively during the meeting. According to Drs Stephen Wilson, Keira Mason, Leda Mugayar and Eduardo Alcaino, there is still a great need to improve the training of dental providers for the purpose of reducing adverse effects and improving sedation outcomes. In addition, new sedative agents were discussed that may improve the efficacy, quality and outcome.

With regard to early caries prevention, Prof. Svante Teetem from Denmark emphasised the importance of biofilm in dental caries and how we can prevent dental decay through measures like metabolic inhibitors, diet frequency interventions, saliva stimulation and anti-bacterial therapy. Special attention was given to the caries balance concept, and how we should strengthen the protective factors and avoid the pathological factors. The importance of risk assessment to determine the correct management protocol was discussed too.

Speaking of treatment concepts, what is your personal view of the use of dental implants in adolescents?

Congenitally absent teeth is a common condition. When a patient is missing a tooth, you can either close the space orthodontically or you can replace it with an implant or a bridge.

The techniques and materials in implantology have improved so much in the recent years that the results obtained after placing implants and restorations thereafter are indeed impressive; however, there are many factors to consider regarding this option. In adolescents, we should wait until growth is complete to avoid problems with the position of the implant.

The congress paid tribute to genetics with a lecture series. How does this new field improve the understanding of processes in children’s dental health?

As we gain more knowledge about the way genes regulate normal and abnormal processes in the human body, we have more tools at our disposal to fight certain conditions and diseases. At the meeting, genetic factors in the development of enamel and other dental features, such as the size and number of teeth, were discussed.

It is very important to know that genomics plays a significant role in the development of caries. The information we gain in this area in the future will help in terms of personalised risk assessment, as well as disease prevention and treatment, as discussed in another lecture series.

Overall, we aim to contribute significantly to the improvement of oral health in children through our activities worldwide.

You have just taken over the responsibilities of the IAPD presidency from Dr Alcaino from Australia. What are the most important issues that you feel need to be addressed in the years to come?

We will continue with the programmes the IAPD has developed in the past and include others that are aimed at strengthening our association. For example, we intend to organise more regional meetings, similar to those we held in countries like Russia, Brazil and India in recent years. We will also continue helping individuals from underdeveloped countries to attend our meetings and organise educational programmes in countries that need help in the field of paediatric dental care.

Furthermore, we want to increase the already huge IAPD membership by including more national associations and individual members, especially postgraduate students, who are the future of our specialty. In addition, increased participation of our members through our webpage, online lectures and other Internet resources will be promoted.

The International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry is one of the most important scientific publications worldwide in our field and we intend to continue supporting it.

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The oral health of children in underdeveloped and developed nations alike leaves much to be desired. Is there generally a lack of awareness?

DT: This year’s IAPD congress saw an exceptionally high number of presentations by domestic speakers. What was your impression of the quality of the lectures and the paediatric field in the country in general?

Dr Jorge Luis Castillo: Dentistry in South Korea is definitely of very high quality. I had the opportunity to attend some of the lectures by Korean presenters and the level of the presentations was impressive. An approach to early Class III malocclusion, demonstrating different treatment scenarios in different dentition stages, presented by Dr Kitar Park from the Sungkyunkwan University School of Medicine in Seoul, caught my attention in particular. I think there is much to learn from our Korean colleagues.

Did the congress meet expectations with regard to the scientific programme and participation?

If this congress has demonstrated one thing, it is that interest in paediatric dentistry has increased all over the world. With more than 1,800 delegates attending from all five continents, the number of participants at this year’s congress undoubtedly exceeded the expectations of the local organising committee.