

Primary Prevention

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Received: June 12, 2015; **Published:** June 15, 2015

In the short period of time since EC Dental Science journal has been up and running; we have read a lot of quality articles published. They have dealt with various topics like management of caries, some clinical tips, treatment techniques, surgical procedures, behaviour management, wound healing, CBCT, interdisciplinary approaches, regenerative techniques, lasers, case reports, removable appliances, prosthetic rehabilitation, lesions, habits, dental anatomy, biofilms, etc.

Perhaps, it is a reflection of the times we live in, that we do not find any articles on prevention of disease - in our case dental caries. It is not a criticism nor should be construed as a body blow to the efforts of the various authors who have worked hard to present their views and research. However, I would like to take this opportunity while writing this editorial to present a view often forgotten... are we as doctors, just treating patients, and are we glamorising such contributions? Where is 'support for prevention is better than cure'?

I would like to repeat that it is not to question the selection of articles, nor the articles that were published, but a cursory glance of many journals in various dental specialities world over, except the ones on preventive dentistry show the same trend and there too we do not find basic research articles or views on primary prevention.

Dental caries is not a disease that is eventual but it is a preventable disease and one that is easily preventable. Not much of money or energy needs to be devoted to its prevention. Despite this, the caries levels are high in most sections of the society. This brings me to the core of this editorial. WHY? Why is dental caries so prevalent in our societies even after half a century of exceptional advances in our field?

The reasons might be quite a few. But one aspect I would like to focus upon here is the time we devote to patients who visit us. What do we do with that interaction? It is our time to improve their lives. Do we place strong emphasis on preventive measures, do follow up on them. Do we monitor them? I think we should all ask this question to ourselves with utmost honesty. The point being that we are losing this vital time by focussing more on the treatment procedures, instructions, etc., whereas we might be able to change the approach of our patients toward preventive measures.

The role of prevention of dental caries is not given due importance in day to day clinical dental practice. I think that we are missing out big time on an opportunity to make a real difference and that we should make the most of the few minutes that we get with the patient to impart knowledge and wisdom regarding preventing dental caries, and there should be well established follow ups and continuous monitoring with regard to this.

While many suggestions can be made to improve the situation with regard to educating patients on preventive dental care it would be worthwhile to invite the views of the dental fraternity and present a consolidated view of their wisdom for the benefit of the patients.

Volume 1 Issue 5 June 2015

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