

Dental Health Foundation,
Ireland

Annual Report

2002

Promoting Oral Health in Ireland

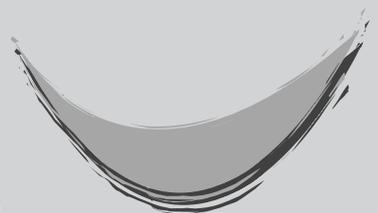


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Introduction

The Dental Health Foundation has played a vital role in raising the profile of oral health in Ireland since its establishment. The Foundation is a non-profit-making, non-political and equal opportunities independent body, operating as a charitable trust. Its mission is to promote oral health in Ireland by providing effective resources or interventions and by influencing policy through a multi-sectoral partnership approach.

One of the major milestones of 2002 was the launch of the Forum on Fluoridation Report in September. The Dental Health Foundation immediately responded by calling for the development of an effective and sustained public information campaign, aimed at parents of young children, about the proper use of fluoride toothpaste for under-seven year olds. Relevant information was made available to parents on the Foundation website, and the DHF revised its *Oral Health in Ireland* policy document in light of the report's recommendations. The Foundation also called for research, as a matter of urgency, into the oral health, dietary and oral hygiene practices of children under five year olds.

The Dental Health Foundation welcomed the establishment of the first Irish Society for Disability and Oral Health, which held its inaugural conference in July 2002 in the Dublin Dental School and Hospital. A general meeting was held in Dublin in October, at which the society was officially launched, a committee was elected, and Professor June Nunn was appointed its first President.

The first Health & Literacy Research report was published in 2002, commissioned by the National Adult Literacy Agency. The DHF is a member of the Health and Literacy Research Steering Committee. The report concluded that poor literacy skills were a significant barrier to health treatment. It also found that people with low levels of literacy struggled with essential health information and medical consent forms, did not fully understand procedures, found hospital signage confusing, and felt incapable of taking part in decision-making.

One of the highlights of the year was the Executive Director's presentation to the FDI World Dental Congress on *Oral Health Promotion – Policies and Strategies*, in Vienna, October 2002 where the dental fraternity of the globe came together for the World Dental Parliament. The paper was well received and prompted the emergence of an international network of people interested in the developing a strategic approach to oral health promotion.

The role of the Dental Health Foundation is determined by its core strategic objectives, as defined in its *Five Year Strategic Initiative*. These objectives are to strengthen the Foundation's advocacy role; to provide information and education on fluorides; to develop programmes and information specifically tailored to meet the special needs groups in Irish society; to take a multi-sectoral approach in the promotion of oral health; and finally, to provide support for health professionals.

Organisational Review

The year 2002 was an important one for the Dental Health Foundation, during which it undertook a comprehensive review of the organisation. The DHF committed management time and resources to the completion of this review, taking into consideration the relevant elements of the National Health Strategy *Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You* and the findings and recommendations of the Forum on Fluoridation.

This review came up with critical recommendations for the future. The Foundation has now refocused and prioritised its activities in light of its strategic objectives, available resources, and external developments.

The need for an improved strategy in the area of oral health promotion has been further highlighted by the NUI Galway study, identifying significant deficiencies in the delivery of oral health information and services. (*Oral Health Promotion in Ireland*, Centre for Health Promotion Studies, NUI, Galway; May 2002.) The importance of the Dental Health Foundation's role in promoting oral health was acknowledged by the Report of the Forum on Fluoridation and by the NUI, Galway research report.

ADVOCACY

The Dental Health Foundation's Advocacy Role concentrates on presenting persuasive arguments to policy makers and legislators about the relevance of oral health issues, while maximising the use of submissions, reports and representation to advance its agenda. The Foundation endeavours to raise the profile of oral health and its benefits and to increase knowledge of the economic impact of oral diseases and conditions on the individual, society and the State.

Submissions

The DHF continued to make recommendations to relevant government policy makers in areas that were perceived to have an impact on oral and general health. The organisation was proactive in advocating that oral health issues be addressed in all relevant dimensions of the new health strategy, *Quality and Fairness – A Health System for You*, including *Primary Care – A New Direction* and the planned National Health Information Strategy.

The Foundation actively participated in the establishment of the new Public Health Alliance, which was set up with the support of the Institute of Public Health.

The National Cancer Strategy

The Dental Health Foundation made a submission to the National Forum on Cancer Services in November 2002, calling for an organised, co-ordinated approach to the oral and dental management of head and neck cancer patients. There is overwhelming support for such action from all the major head and neck oncology teams in Ireland.

Competition Authority Study of the Professions

The Foundation responded to a call for submissions for the Competition Authority's Study of the Professions. The submission focused on the evidence base for identified consumer concerns which act as a barrier to the oral health and social gain of Irish people. Report details can be found at www.tca.ie/professions.html.

National Research Projects

The Foundation continued to advocate for oral health inputs into commissioned research programmes relating to the health and social gain of Irish people, for example, the *Second National Survey of Lifestyles, Attitude and Nutrition (SLÁN)*, and the *Lifeways Cohort Study*. This study is the central focus of a new multi-disciplinary Health Research Board unit in NUI, Galway researching socio-economic determinants and health status.

Awards

The Foundation continued its sponsorship of the following awards:

- *Young Scientist of the Year Awards* – oral health category. The Dental Health Foundation sponsors a special award each year in the 'ESAT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition'. The winners of this year's award were Heather Barry and Aisling McStay from Santa Sabina School, Greenfield Road, Sutton, Co Dublin. This senior group project looked at which foods inhibit dental plaque.

- *Health Services Research Award - Irish Association for Dental Research* The Dental Health Foundation was pleased to announce in August of 2002 the establishment of the *Research in Primary Dental Care Award* in collaboration with the International Association for Dental Research – Irish Division. This award will be presented annually to support research by investigators whose current main position is in a primary care setting, such as a health board/authority or general dental practice. Health services research is the primary focus of the award and this may include epidemiology, audit, health promotion or research into other health service issues.
- *Special Needs Research Award* – The DHF agreed with the newly-formed Society for Disability and Oral Health to fund a research award, encouraging research initiatives in this area.

Communications

The DHF produced a bi-annual news report outlining the organisation's activities and progress during the year. This news report, as with all other relevant information, was posted to the DHF website. Where possible, the DHF has made its resources and publications available in IT format. The second edition of the 2002 news report was issued in December 2002.

Public Information Service

The Foundation has dealt with thousands of written and telephone enquiries throughout the year. These enquiries vary greatly, but many are for specific leaflets or packs of prepared information. The Foundation aims to ensure that all requests for facts and figures from the public are answered, either from stock material or by referral to specific agencies.

Enquiries come from both specialist and general audiences. A large percentage of telephone calls come from members of the public who are looking for information to help them understand dental problems and their solutions.

As well as enquiries to its office, the DHF also services all enquiries about oral health promotion made to the Department of Health and Children, The Irish Dental Association and the Dental Council.

Database Driven Website

The Dental Health Foundation's website was recently reviewed and redesigned with the aim of ensuring that users have access to a site that is content-rich, informative, easily accessible and navigation friendly.

With the aid of the Foundation's new database-driven site, existing sections are quickly modified and new sections have been added, providing a fast and efficient service for users. This type of website design facilitates a full website search, and in an effort to ensure ease of navigation throughout, drop down menus have been included on the main navigation bar.

In line with the National Disability Authority's guidelines on website accessibility for people with disabilities, a text only version of the Foundation's site has been developed which will be updated on a regular basis in conjunction with the graphical site.

The Dental Health Foundation's website is recognised as a reliable source of information by the Department of Health and Children. The Foundation's website is featured on the Department's Health Promotion Unit recommended website links page.

The Dental Health Foundation's new website went live on September 10, 2002, on the day the *Report on the Forum on Fluoridation* was launched.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ON FLUORIDES

Forum on Fluoridation

The Dental Health Foundation responded promptly to the *Report on the Forum on Fluoridation* launch in September 2002, by calling for an effective and sustained public information campaign, aimed at parents of young children, about the essential use of fluoride toothpastes for under-sevens. The issue of the appropriate use of fluoride toothpaste is one of the key recommendations in the report of the Forum on Fluoridation.

To assist parents in this regard in the short term, the Foundation has developed information for parents, which is available on www.dentalhealth.ie. In addition, the DHF revised its policy document, *Oral Health in Ireland*, to provide guidance to parents and healthcare professionals on the appropriate use of the full range of oral health care products. The Foundation achieved significant coverage on foot of its press release from both the print and broadcast media.

Dental Health Foundation Website

The organisation maintained an up-to-date section on *Information and Education on Fluorides*, containing current information for both the consumer and the health professional and providing a link to the Forum on Fluoridation website.

Schools Programmes

- **(5 - 6 year olds)** Following discussions with the Health Promotion Department, South Western Area Health Board, and the Dental Services in the Eastern Region, the DHF has identified the modifications necessary to ensure the *Mighty Mouth* schools programme is consistent with the Social, Personal and Health Education of the National School Curriculum, as recommended in the evaluation report (December 2001). This initiative will be advanced in 2003.
- **(7 - 11 year olds)** The evaluation, planning and development of a schools-based dental health programme for 7-11 year olds was agreed in 2002. Partners in this initiative include the WHO, Oral Health Services Research Centre, University College Cork, Northern Area Health Board of the Eastern Regional Health Authority. It is a bilateral programme, involving the Northern Ireland Public Dental Services and Queen's University Belfast, and includes the testing of resource material based on needs-assessment of pupils, parents and teachers.

These programmes are being developed within the context of The Best Health for Children initiative established by the Chief Executive Officers of the Health Boards.

SUPPORTING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN HEALTH PROMOTION

Specialist Certificate

- Throughout 2002, the DHF has worked towards an agreed approach to the conversion of the Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion (Oral Health) to an Information Technology based distance-learning format, with the Centre for Health Promotion Studies NUI, Galway and the course author, Dr. Mary O'Farrell, Principal Dental Surgeon, North Eastern Health Board. The project proposal is in the final stages of agreement and it is anticipated that the course will be on offer in this format for the academic year 2003/2004.
- The Foundation continued to support the programme delivery in 2002, with 22 students participating.

Special Events

- The Foundation supported the Annual Winter Meeting of the Society of Chief and Principal Dental Surgeons in Ireland.
- The DHF provided the *EU Congress of the European Academy of Paediatric Dentistry*, which was held in June 2002, with key publications for inclusion in the delegates' pack at the event.
- The DHF facilitated and managed the *Inaugural All-Island Meeting of the Principal Dental Surgeons, Republic of Ireland and the Senior Clinical Dental Manager and Dental Directors of the Northern Ireland Public Dental Services*. This initiative facilitated an exchange of resources on an All-Island basis, allowing the rationalisation of approaches to information provision consistent with the Dental Health Foundation's strategic objectives.

Health Services Personnel

- The Foundation continued to be available for meetings on an individual and collective basis as the need arose and in particular with the Principal Dental Surgeons with Regional Responsibility for Oral Health Promotion. Support and guidance for Oral Health Promoters recently assigned to these posts within Health Boards was available on an on-going basis. The Foundation responded directly to the growing number of requests for assistance from Oral Health Promoters in areas of resource development and event management.
- The Foundation also continued to be available for meetings with the Health Promotion personnel, for example Managers and Dieticians of the country's Regional Health Promotion Units.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Endocarditis Prophylaxis Identity Card

The Dental Health Foundation, in association with the Dental and Cardiology Departments, Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin, launched an *Endocarditis Prophylaxis Identity Card* in February 2002 to mark the Dental Health Foundation's *Saint Apollonia Annual Event*. The card was distributed as advised by the cardiology Department and samples were made available to all dental surgeons on the DHF communications list. Details of the launch were immediately posted to the website.

Professional Support

The Foundation has agreed a project proposal for a resource support Special Care Dentistry Programme for dental undergraduates and postgraduate students at the Dublin Dental Hospital. Once developed, adaptation and access to this health programme can be made available to the wider audience of dental and healthcare professionals and carers in general.

Special Interest Group

The Dental Health Foundation supported the launch of the Irish Society for Disability and Oral Health on July 4, 2002, at the Dublin Dental Hospital.

MULTI-SECTORAL

Tobacco and Oral Health

- Work is underway with the Dental Services and the Health Promotion Departments of the three Area Boards in the Eastern Regional Health Authority to develop a tobacco and oral health initiative which is consistent with the Eastern Regional Health Authority Regional Tobacco Control Strategy (2001).

Best Health for Children

- The Foundation collaborated with *Best Health for Children* in identifying child health and well-being indicators as part of the EU Children's Quality of Life Indicators initiative. The organisation participated in the *Best Health for Children* conference in October 2002.

Adolescent Programme

- **(12 – 13 year olds)** The DHF has worked closely with the North Western Health Board's Oral Health Promotion Advisory Group, in the development and approval of a pilot programme called 'Cool Water Cool Smiles'. The programme is aimed at raising awareness of the oral health problems caused by the consumption of fizzy drinks. It aims to investigate the effectiveness of this approach in reducing consumption, i.e. applying a social learning theory to oral health promotion, and to ascertain the attitude of young adolescents towards it.

Health and Literacy Guidelines

The DHF participated in the steering committee of the NALA Health and Literacy Research Report throughout 2002, and welcomed the report's findings in September 2002. The report confirms that low literacy levels represent a barrier to accessing health services, not least because a majority of health staff questioned were unaware of the size and impact of the issue. The Foundation agrees that health communication needs to be transformed to ensure that the half a million adults with poor literacy get adequate health services.

EU and International Dimensions

The Foundation continued communications with the EU Framework Convention Alliance, US National Institutes for Health and the Centre for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia and the World Health Organisation, Oral Health Programme, the Council of European Chief Dental Officers and the All-Island Bodies with responsibility for Oral Health Promotion.

Membership

International

The Dental Health Foundation maintained its membership of the European Association of Dental Public Health, the International Dental Federation and the Oral Health Promotion Research Group.

National

The organisation continued its membership of the Steering committee for the Health and Literacy Initiative, the Forum for the National Health Promoting Hospitals Network, the National Heart Alliance, the Irish Division of the International Association of Dental Research.

Presentations/Representation

The organisation continued its role in the provision of professional presentations on the role of the Dental Health Foundation and Oral Health Promotion, to programmes such as the Masters in Dental Public Health, UCC, and the Post-graduate and Medical Dental Board Vocational Training Programme.

The Foundation had representation at appropriate conferences and symposia throughout 2002, in line with this strategic objective. Some of those attended include; The Wheel; Population Health; British Fluoridation Society; Launch of Forum on Fluoridation Report; FDI World Dental Congress; Best Health for Children; Competition Authority; Irish Heart Foundation; IADH Congress in Athens 2002; Public Health Alliance, and the FOI Act Workshops.

The Foundation also made a presentation on Project Management to the Community Dietician and Nutrition Managers of the Health Boards, in the Department of Health and Children.

FDI World Dental Congress

One of the highlights of the year was the Executive Director's presentation to the FDI World Dental Congress on *Oral Health Promotion – Policies and Strategies* in October 2002. The dental fraternity of the world came together in the beautiful city of Vienna in Austria for the 2002 Annual World Dental Congress from October 1 to 5, 2002. The FDI business meeting programme, the World Dental Parliament, was held parallel to the splendid Scientific Programme and Trade Exhibition. A total of 9,490 people registered for the congress. The paper was well received and has resulted in the emergence of an international network of people interested in the development of a strategic approach to Oral Health Promotion.

CONCLUSION

The Dental Health Foundation views the implementation of the Forum on Fluoridation report recommendations as a major priority in the years to come. The Forum's report and the Foundation's own research indicate that parents of children under seven years old are mostly unaware of the importance of the proper use of fluoride toothpaste - a situation that must be addressed. The necessity for gathering national research data on oral health issues for children under five years old is also vital, if appropriate dental services for this age group are to be developed.

In this European and International Year of Disability 2003, it is fitting that the Foundation should focus on those with special needs who suffer disproportionately from oral as well as general ill health. The DHF will continue to work with the newly established Irish Society for Disability and Oral Health to advance the cause and practice of Special Care Dentistry in Ireland.

The DHF sees an urgent need to transform health communication to ensure that the half a million adults in this country with poor literacy get adequate access to and treatment from the health services. In light of the findings of the *Health & Literacy Research* report 2002, it will work towards eliminating the barrier presented by lack of literacy.

In conclusion, the Dental Health Foundation looks forward to continuing to implement its revised objectives and to face new challenges, while working within the context of the National Health Strategy, *Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You*.

Board of Trustees and Partners

Board of Trustees

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Charity Reference Number:

CHY 6200

Current Collaborative Programme Partners

- Best Health for Children, Work in Progress Programme
- Centre for Health Promotion Studies, National University of Ireland, Galway
- Centre for the Study of Developmental Disabilities, National University of Ireland, Dublin
- Clinical Dental School and Hospital, Wilton, Cork
- Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London Medical School
- Department of Health and Children (including Health Promotion Unit)
- Eastern Regional Health Authority
 - East Coast Area Health Board
 - South Western Area Health Board
 - Northern Area Health Board

- Health and Social Services Board (Northern Ireland)
- Midland Health Board
- Mid-Western Health Board
- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism in Ireland
- National Paediatric Cardiology Services, Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Dublin
- North Eastern Health Board
- North Western Health Board
- Pavee Point, Travellers Centre
- Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, Faculty of Public Health Medicine
- School of Clinical Dentistry, Queens University Belfast, Northern Ireland
- School of Communications, Dublin City University
- School of Dental Science, University of Dublin, Trinity College
- Society of Chief and Principal Dental Surgeons in Ireland
- South Eastern Health Board
- Southern Health Board
- The National Adult Literacy Agency
- Western Health Board
- WHO Oral Health Services Research Centre, University College Cork

Dental Health Foundation

Financial Data 2002

Income & Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st December

| | 2002 € | 2001 € |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Income: | | |
| Department of Health and Children Allocation | 471,000 | 386,699 |
| Other Income | 7,669 | 77,844 |
| | <u>478,669</u> | <u>464,543</u> |
| Expenditure: | | |
| Pay expenditure | 174,007 | 124,155 |
| Non-pay expenditure | 417,611 | 257,296 |
| | <u>591,618</u> | <u>381,451</u> |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for the year | <u>(112,949)</u> | <u>83,092</u> |

Balance Sheet The Year Ended 31st December

| | 2002 € | 2001 € |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Tangible Fixed Assets | <u>17,619</u> | <u>16,711</u> |
| Current Assets | | |
| Debtors | 5,539 | 2,358 |
| Bank | 190,492 | 202,469 |
| | <u>196,031</u> | <u>204,827</u> |
| Creditors | (112,371) | (16,310) |
| Net Current Assets | <u>74,660</u> | <u>188,517</u> |
| Total Net Assets | <u>92,279</u> | <u>205,228</u> |
| Represented By: | | |
| Income & Expenditure Account | <u>92,279</u> | <u>205,228</u> |

NOTES



2002

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