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# DENTAL MEDICINE

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**Title: Dental care for persons with special needs****Michael J Sigal**

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Persons with special needs (PWSN) have limited access to dental care in their communities and dental care is one of the most frequent unmet healthcare needs. PWSN have more untreated caries and periodontal disease, a poorer state of oral hygiene and a greater need for extraction than the general population. Oral health is considered an integral component of overall health. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of oral health issues in persons with developmental disabilities. Persons with special needs (PWSN) still have limited access to required dental care in their communities, this after at least 30 years of education and public advocacy. Dental care is one of the most frequent unmet healthcare needs for persons with special needs. Evidence has demonstrated that PWSN, as a group, has more untreated caries and periodontal disease, a poorer state of oral hygiene and a greater need for extractions than the general population. Oral health is considered an integral component of overall health, and is significant in an individual's quality of life as it pertains to communication, nutrition, emotional expression, taste, social appearance and self-esteem. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of oral health issues in persons with developmental disabilities, their impact on total health and the role of a multidisciplinary team to ensure that oral health is maintained and promoted. Persons with special needs still have limited access to required dental care in their communities, this after more than 50 years of education and public advocacy. Dental care is one of the most frequent unmet healthcare needs for persons with special needs. Evidence has demonstrated that PWSN as a group have more untreated caries and periodontal disease, a poorer state of oral hygiene and a greater need for extractions than the general population. Oral health is considered an integral component of overall health, and is significant in an individual's quality of life as it pertains to communication, nutrition, emotional expression, taste, social appearance and self-esteem. In addition there is now evidence to suggest a link between oral inflammatory disease and diabetes, cardiac disease, and pneumonia. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the issues regarding access to care, specific oral health issues in persons with special needs, their impact on total health and the role of a multidisciplinary team to ensure that oral health is maintained and promoted. A novel educational model which can be applied in a multi-disciplinary manner to introduce students to persons with special needs in a social and clinical framework will be presented. As a result of participating in this session participants will be able to identify oral disease in persons with PWSN. They will also gain understanding of basic care that is required and how to ensure that care is provided.

**Biography**

Dr. Michael J Sigal is Professor and former Head of Pediatric Dentistry at the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Toronto where he was the Director of the MSc Graduate Specialty Program in Pediatric Dentistry for over 20 years. At the Mount Sinai Hospital, he is the Head of the Division of the Dental Program for Persons with Disabilities/ Special Needs, the largest such dental program in Canada and was for the past 15 years the Dentist-in-Chief and Co-director of the Mount Sinai Hospital Dental Residency Program, a postgraduate dental program structured in such a way as to educate the postgraduate resident in dental care for persons with disabilities / special healthcare needs.

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