

Dental public health capacity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the potential role of women

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Abstract

As Dental Public Health consultant my perspective was to study the needs of our community and address it through effective and efficient oral health care strategies. Saudi Arabia has the following socioeconomic indicators: GDP annual growth was four and GDP per capita, PPP, was \$22713. Nearly all the country with sustainable access to improved water source and sustainable to improved sanitation. There are 2.3 dentist rates per 10000 populations. In 2004 it was reported in a sample size 12,200 of primary, intermediate and secondary students the caries prevalence was in primary teeth 74-90% and in permanent teeth 59-80%. Behaviour strategies were adopted to develop the organizational effectiveness for School Based dental Preventive Program in the Saudi National Guard primary schools in Riyadh. This strategy affects the people development, inspiration, participatory decision making, and efficient communication. The program objectives was to increase oral health awareness among school children as prime target, inform about importance of diet, provide regular examination in order to make repairs in earliest stages of diseases or decay and seal fully erupting molars of school children in primary schools. The mobile dental clinics were used in this program to provide dental care. Oral diseases are neglected epidemic tooth decay although it affects 60-90% of school aged children and nearly 100% of adults and seniors. The purpose of this policy and program is to encourage government, ministers of health, health departments, and health personal to initiate, implement, promote and support effective population-base dental prevention programs. Dental public health in Saudi Arabia facing many challenges, there is a need for well integrated dental public health systems which include acceptable guide lines and criteria, institutional, reflect population needs at same time cost-effective. There is a strong need to establish national dental public health association focusing on application of a board range of evidence-based approaches and interventions. Effective programs and policies in dental public health through scientific reasoning, including systematic uses of data and information systems and appropriate use of behavioural science theory and program planning. Women in Saudi Arabia will have potential role as leaders in dental public health like: leadership training for all high potentials, shedding biases regarding women in leaderships and thinking and behaving in new ways.

Biography

Maryam Alfarhan has completed her graduation from Faculty of Dental and Oral Surgery – King Saud University, Riyadh 1986, and received Dental Public Health Master's degree in 1995 from University of London. Currently, she is Consultant of Dental Public Health and was appointed as Director, Oral Health Services program since 2007. During that period of time she developed oral health promotion

programs as part of community dental service in the National Guard of Saudi Arabia. She worked extensively in the area of oral health promotion school based programs, and currently works on voluntary basis in the position of Executive Group Member of the Oral Health Working Group of the WFPHA. In 2017, she is awarded with the title of Diplomat of the Global Charter of the year 2017.