

BACKGROUND

Patient Safety is a major initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2005, WHO initiated its first global patient safety challenge – Clean Care is Safer Care. The goal of the challenge was to ensure that infection control is acknowledged universally as a solid and essential basis towards patient safety and supports the reduction of health care-associated infections and their consequences. Hand hygiene was a focus of the campaign.

The Second Global Patient Safety Challenge: Safe Surgery Saves Lives addresses the safety of surgical care. WHO Patient Safety initiated work on the Challenge in January 2007. The goal of the Challenge is to improve the safety of surgical care around the world by defining a core set of safety standards that can be applied in all WHO Member States.

Currently, WHO Patient Safety is working towards finding solutions how best to support ongoing international activities to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Activities are also ongoing to finalize an AMR work plan document during the first half of 2010.

DENTAL APPLICATION

In 2006, Dr. Poul Erik Petersen, Chief, Oral Health Programme at WHO, was invited to be OSAP's first Dr. John S. Zapp Memorial Award speaker. During his attendance at the meeting, he approached the organization to work with him as part of the WHO's Global Patient Safety Challenge to translate current scientific evidence and policy information available for infection control, with an emphasis on oral healthcare settings. The goal of this work would be to develop a written document, "Practical Guidelines for Infection Control in Oral Healthcare Settings" to provide a framework for safe delivery of oral healthcare in a variety of settings. OSAP, through experts Eve Cuny MS and Kathy Eklund RDH MHP completed the work in 2007. The guide is being prepared for publication now.

In 2009, OSAP invited patient safety advocate Linda Harvey RDH MS to address "Never Events in Dentistry" at annual symposium. Later in 2009, OSAP formed a patient safety task force and reached out to WHO, CDC and FDI.

FDI had been invited to contribute dentistry's perspective to a review of a multi-curricular guide to patient safety. Based on WHO's Patient Safety Curriculum Guide for Medical Students that encourages and facilitates the teaching of patient safety topics to medical students, the multi-curricular guide widens the scope to include all health professionals. This work is being done in partnership with the International Confederation of Midwives, as well as the International Council of Nurses, the World Dental Federation (FDI), the International Pharmaceutical Federation and the World Medical Association under the auspices of the World Health Professions Alliance.

FDI and OSAP developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure the dental-oriented review addressed different regions of the world. OSAP also included reviewers who represented other oral health positions as dental team communication breakdown has been proven to contribute to dental patient safety incidents.

REVIEW TEAM

As mentioned, OSAP, the Organization for Safety & Asepsis Procedures, is working with the World Health Organization (WHO), World Dental Federation (FDI) and International Federation of Dental Educators and Associations (IFDEA) on the review of WHO's Multi-professional Patient Safety Curriculum Guide. The curriculum guide is designed to support international health profession organizations to implement patient safety education, to promote and enhance the status of patient safety worldwide and to prepare both students for general practice and practitioners to implement best practice in their daily routines. However, the guide is written broadly to address many professions.

The purpose of the task force is to review the guide from a dental perspective via online workspace and with teleconference and virtual online meetings. As the core body of text is designed to be generically applicable, dental-specific material should be included within the existing topics in the framework. The emphasis for this curriculum guide should remain focused on generic patient safety skills, and the charge of the task force is to develop specific dental examples to support the translation of this material to the dental profession.

This is but the first step in officially introducing this important initiative to the dental profession. A more extensive project plan to address training tools, etc. will be developed following the curricula review.