

■ Q&A with Sue Aldenhoven, RDH, and Marjolijn Hovius, RDH By *Christine A. Hovliaras-Delozier, RDH, BS, MBA*



IFDH President Aldenhoven and President-Elect Hovius graciously granted me an exclusive interview for Access.

Access: What is the goal of this International Symposium on Dental Hygiene, the theme of which is the "Many Cultures of Dental Hygiene?"

Sue Aldenhoven: The thing that encompasses the IFDH is that it has 25 member countries, and Canada is multi-cultural and the host country of this meeting. The goal is to foster the exchange of knowledge, research and technology to provide a forum for the exchange of that knowledge and to provide a forum for networking and improving the relationships between dental hygienists globally.

Access: What has IFDH accomplished under your leadership as president?

SA: We need to continue to evolve and grow, and we are raising the awareness of dental hygiene on a global level through the implementation of International Dental Hygiene Day, which was celebrated in different countries. The second Wednesday in October was originally selected as the celebration for this special day. However, some countries were not able to celebrate it at that time so the IFDH developed a resolution that would allow flexibility in the member countries being able to schedule this [observance] in their respective country [so that it] would be successful for them as an organization. They can celebrate dental hygiene as a profession in certain ways like a public forum and have seminars for their members. Different countries interpret this day differently.

Access: What are some of the issues that IFDH as an organization has had to face?

SA: We would like to work in collaboration with other world dental associations in the future. We were unsuccessful in working with them currently, and we look forward to better success in the future.

MH: We are growing all the time and have evolved much more as a profession and as an organization and want to work in collaboration with other dental and health care organizations.

Access: What are some of the trends that dental hygienists need to know about globally in order for them to consider becoming a member of IFDH?

SA: IFDH exposes dental hygienists to other countries where there is a network of professionals. The problems that hygienists face in one country are common in other countries. The things that affect a dental hygienist in Australia will affect a dental hygienist in the Netherlands. I had one of our members tell me that — that we are not so different. It doesn't matter what country you come from; the same global trends seem to be occurring. It is important for hygienists to know that they are facing the same type of issues that [hygienists in] other countries are facing.

Marjolijn Hovius: If dental hygienists are able to do something in one country, then I can say to my government in the Netherlands that we want to do the same thing. If they can do it there and it is safe, then there should be no arguments that it can't be done here. It is important to use ideas and strategies from some countries to help other countries achieve their goals in dental hygiene.

SA: If the precedent is already set, and it's working in one country, why can't it work in another country?

MH: Education occurs through certain steps. You go to one step and stay there a little bit and then go to another and stay there a little bit. Through the evolution, you repeatedly have the same type of issues. Being in IFDH offers you the opportunity to reflect and understand what is happening in other countries. If you see what is happening in other countries, you can see what is happening in your own. In Denmark, dental hygienists are paid by insurance companies and are paid like dentists. If they can manage it there, then why can't we manage it somewhere else? It gives you a lot more potential to negotiate with the dental organization, as well as your own dental hygiene organization. In addition, dental hygienists must work as a team with their colleagues — it should be a team effort.

Access: As the new IFDH president from 2007 to 2010, what is your vision for IFDH?

MH: My vision is to be more conscious of all the good things that dental hygienists are doing. The one thing I learned from the Sunstar Awards is how little dental

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hygienists know about what other dental hygienists do. In my inaugural speech, I will focus on reaching out to others. I challenge them to tell other people about what you are doing, like Elina Katsman who went to the Dominican Republic on a holiday. When she was there she saw that the people there had very bad teeth and she wanted to do something. She got funding and has 20 different centers with 200 volunteers and 72 people who are paid who provide preventive care to these people. She has treated over a million people including children and adults in the span of 11 years to provide them with preventive care. Elina is not the only one, there are others. The way she did it can be used to educate others.

SA: We need to market ourselves and let others know what we are doing.

MH: We don't promote ourselves enough. So many wonderful things are happening and you want to help others. The researchers in IFDH want to do the research and publish it on the Web site so others can use it. It is a win-win situation for everyone. I really think the delegates in IFDH are such a strong body of women and I am really looking forward to working with them. In American, you would say "exciting," but I am going to say "interesting" of how we are going to continue to develop IFDH as an organization.

SA: At this meeting, more practical and visionary ideas came out.

MH: Stimulating things have come out and we need to be focused.

Access: Anything else that you would like to share with the readers of Access which include members of ADHA, potential member, and student dental hygienists who are members of our SADHA?

MH: I think they should join the IFDH. It is such a way to broaden their scope and we sometimes tend to be narrow as dental hygienists. Sue has taught me so much in the three years of working with her in IFDH. I hope that I will teach Maria several things in the next three years. If everyone can do that, we grow. You need to keep your mind open. Becoming a member of IFDH and attending an IFDH meeting is a way to open your mind.

SA: I just think they need to believe in themselves and remain true. Don't be afraid to take the next steps.

MH: They should aspire to outgrow their mentors.

SA: Become mature and take responsibility for their professional development. Take responsibility for their own professional development. They should want to become mentors for others.

MH: They have to accept that they need to become better qualified. We have quite a few students who outgrow you as a faculty member and this is a part of life.

Access: This reminds me of what my parents told me that you only want better for your children, and we can use this analogy in that we only want better for our students than what we had.

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ner. This was a wonderful opportunity to meet the president, president-elect and treasurer and get a chance to interact with them on a professional level. I had the opportunity to interview Sue Aldenhoven and Marjolijn Hovius (see sidebar on pages xx and xx.).

■ The 2010 IFDH Meeting - Glasgow, Scotland

Michael Wheeler, RDH, president of the British Dental Hygienists' Association (BDHA) and Marina Thompson, BDHA president-elect invited everyone to the 2010 IFDH Meeting in Glasgow, Scotland, July 1-3. It will be another exciting meeting with educational sessions, free papers, poster presentations, exhibitors and many collaborative and networking sessions.

Closing Ceremonies

The keynote speaker for the IFDH closing ceremonies was Joanne Clovis, DipDH, BEd, MSc, PhD, from Canada, who delivered "Inter-Professional Education, Practice, and Research: Making the Connection for Dental Hygiene." She spoke about what "interprofessional" means, the advantages and barriers of it and how this can provide meaning and value to the dental hygiene profession.

If you are interested in joining the IFDH, please visit their Web site at www.ifdh.org. ■