



Editorial

The Spanish Society of Epidemiology and Oral Public Health

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In 2019 the Sociedad Española de Epidemiología y Salud Pública Oral (SESPO, The Spanish Society of Epidemiology and Oral Public Health) approached BASCD and EADPH about using *Community Dental Health* as their official journal. Very pleasant discussions between all parties mean that henceforth, SESPO will translate the abstracts of all papers published in *Community Dental Health* so that they may be placed on our website. The SESPO website will link to the translated abstracts.

As well as promoting access to members of SESPO, we hope that this link will promote stronger links between workers in dental public health across Europe more generally. As well as that, the translations will make *Community Dental Health* accessible in one of the most spoken languages worldwide.

The Spanish Society of Epidemiology and Oral Public Health is a scientific organization whose main objectives are the study of the distribution of oral diseases in Spain, their presentation and the impact they generate on the health of the population, with the analysis of the social determinants of health, as well as the study and promotion of prevention, diagnosis and early treatment of oral diseases.

SESPO was founded in 1992 in Granada, and today has its registered office in Madrid, in the General Dentists Council, as it is a society assigned to it. SESPO has 166 associate members, most of whom are dentists who work in public health and/or in dental schools, in preventive and community dentistry departments. Recently, some dental hygienists have become associate members. Every year the society holds a National Congress and the Spring Scientific Day. These conferences and meetings are for all health professionals interested in prevention, oral public health, and epidemiology. SESPO has also edited books containing the keynote lectures and subject-matter of the Spring Scientific Day that have been distributed to the members, some of which are available in the website (<https://sespo.es/material-editado/>).

Between 1998 and 2007, technical reports were published about fluoridated water, fluorosis, fluoride in toothpaste, pit and fissure sealants, xylitol, oral piercing, and amalgam fillings. (<http://sespo.es/informes-tecnicos>). They have devised protocols for the care of caries high risk children, people with MIH Syndrome, those taking bisphosphonates, oral care during pregnancy and oral care management for patients with heart disease. (<http://sespo.es/atencion-primaria/protocolos/>)

Health policy is interesting in Spain in so far as the country has 17 Autonomous Communities, with different policies regarding oral health benefits and different health services to provide public dental primary care. A SESPO experts working group analyzed this situation, and published two technical reports that were delivered to each public administration to raise awareness about inequalities in oral care that can be generated with these variability of benefits that differ between autonomous communities.

Since 2000, SESPO members have designed and chaired epidemiological studies of oral health in Spain, following the WHO method. These studies are promoted by the Dentists General Council of Spain every 5 years. A database of these is available (<http://sespo.es/bancodatos/estudios-epidemiologicos-nacionales/>).

In 2012, SESPO organized the first and only ICDAS calibration course in Spain in which 10 SESPO members were calibrated by Professor Gail Douglas. In 2015 Professor Douglas was invited to present on ICDAS at the National Congress held in Madrid to continue the education of our partners in this methodology.

Members of SESPO are part of the “1st Iberian Advisory Council of Caries”, promoted by Colgate in 2013, with the aim of developing a plan to arrest dental caries in the Iberian Peninsula. In 2014, the consensus of this group on the “Strategies and measures in Spain and Portugal for the prevention and non-invasive treatment of dental caries in the dental clinic” was published in the Journal of the General Council of Dentists of Spain (RCOE, 2014). One of the needs identified by this Advisory Council was to develop a Clinical Practice Guide for the prevention and management of dental caries, as well as a course for dentists and dental hygienists in order to improve knowledge about dental caries management and its prevention. These clinical practice guidelines have been prepared by members of SESPO and have been disseminated throughout the country (<https://colgate-formacion.es>).

Prevention was not a central interest in dentistry in Spain, but has gained the attention of professionals, as reflected by the growth in the number of members seen in recent years and by registrations at their congresses. The interest in maintaining patient health with prevention or a minimally invasive and less aggressive approach has motivated a deep change in dental public health, policy and research.

In 2015, at the XXI congress in Madrid, the board decided to explore a link with EADPH to grow and contact a scientific society with similar objectives in Europe. This would enable SESPO to collaborate with professionals with the same interests in different countries, with different political situations and public health services. The vice-president at the time, Manuel Bravo, previously the Spanish chief dental officer, introduced the idea of organizing a joint EADPH-SESPO congress in Spain. SESPO was welcomed by EADPH, and in 2018 organized a joint 23rd EADPH and 24th SESPO congress in Mallorca. This was an important forum to meet and collaborate at an international level. The incorporation of SESPO to the Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future, ACFF, was agreed as the Spanish chapter, which was finally signed on June 2019. Other agreements were also developed at that congress, for instance that members of both societies could pay the same registration fees at SESPO and EADPH conferences, and the idea of incorporating Special Interest Groups into SESPO. This mutual collaboration has allowed SESPO to grow and become stronger. At the same time, it seems that the interest of the Spanish

Government in oral Health strengthened SESPO's role, hence the 2019 Spring Scientific Day was organized at the Ministry of Health, with the Minister participating in the incorporation of SESPO into the ACFF. SESPO took the opportunity to present her with a document with proposals to improve oral health in Spain.

Some SESPO members are also leading the development of the Proposal for a Curriculum of Cariology for Spanish Universities as part of their commitment to ACFF.

Finally, SESPO approached *Community Dental Health*, the official journal of EADPH and BASCD, to consider whether it could fulfill a similar role for our Society. We hope that this will be a satisfying and enduring relationship.

References

- Bravo-Pérez, M., Frias-Bulhosa, J., Casals-Peidro, E., Duarte, F., Rueda-García, J., Lique-Otero, M., Castaño-Seiquer, A. and Scapini, C. (2014): *Propuesta de Estrategias y Medidas en España y Portugal para la Prevención y Tratamiento no Invasivo de la Caries en la Clínica Dental* **19**, 23-27.