

Editorial**The European Association of Dental Public Health: Coming of Age**

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The European Association of Dental Public Health sees the 16th annual congress of this learned society in the wonderful city of Rome, on the 22 ~ 24th September 2011; I recommend you book early as the number and quality of abstracts received so far, exceeds all expectations (www.eadph2011.it).

Coming of age or the “age of majority” is the legal threshold of adulthood. In Scotland this is at age 16, but typically it is 18 and it is the moment when a child stops being a minor and assumes control over their actions, and decisions. However, here the metaphor breaks down, as the precocious EADPH has always been independent.

The law in a given jurisdiction may never actually use the term “age of majority” and the term refers to a collection of laws bestowing the status of adulthood. In practical terms, there are specific actions they are permitted to take, which they could not do before. These may include entering into a binding contract (possibly incurring debt), buying and/or consuming alcoholic drinks or tobacco, driving motor vehicles on public roads, and marrying without obtaining the consent of others. The ages at which these various rights or powers may be exercised vary between different European countries. They also seem to be those lifestyle choices so regularly blamed for poor health and also oral health.

The age of majority applies to consent to dental examinations for dental surveys and as we celebrate 16 years of the EADPH, we now need time to think about coordinating dental surveys across Europe for those age groups recommended by World Health Organisation.

When the European Association of Dental Public Health was founded in 1996 the original aims were (and remain):

- to promote oral health and oral health strategies within Europe;
- to be an advocate on oral health issues;
- to be supportive of oral health initiatives within countries;
- to raise the profile of oral health by developing links with the EU Commission;
- to work towards the development and recognition of the speciality of dental public health within Europe;
- to work constructively with industry by providing a network and expertise in the evaluation of products and to harmonise advice on products impacting on oral health across Europe.

The inaugural meeting of EADPH was a joint meeting held in Dundee in 1996. And next year in 2012 the 17th annual congress will be a joint meeting running over 3 days in London.

Special interest groups, which started at the 13th congress in Heidelberg, will again be meeting. They aim to:

- Bring together people with an interest in the topic concerned
- Review and discuss the “current state of the art” in the topic or a part of the topic
- Identify work that needs to be done to improve the “current state of the art”
- Produce a position paper that sets out the “current state of the art” and future work that needs to be carried out to improve it
- Plan how to develop collaborations to improve some of the identified deficiencies.

The six special interest groups and their chairs are:

- Caries Epidemiology and Prevention - Nigel Pitts
- Gerodontology - Jacques Vanobbergen & Luc Devisschere
- Health Services Research - Rebecca Harris
- Periodontal Epidemiology - Roos Leroy & Ken Eaton
- Prevention of Oral Cancer - Stefano Petti
- Tooth Surface Loss/Erosion - Carolina Ganss

When registering for the congress you select three special interest groups to attend and hopefully contribute. This is an excellent way to start international collaborations across Europe. Register for the annual congress before 15th June 2011 and a reduced member rate applies. I look forward to seeing you there.

This conference has been held in venues across Europe over the years. Previously these were:

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| 1 st Dundee, Scotland | 9 th Porto, Portugal |
| 2 nd Cittadella, Italy | 10 th Liverpool, England |
| 3 rd Santander, Spain | 11 th Prague, Czech Republic |
| 4 th Strasbourg, France | 12 th Ghent, Belgium |
| 5 th Cork, Ireland | 13 th Heidelberg, Germany |
| 6 th Marburg, Germany | 14 th Tromsø, Norway |
| 7 th Athens, Greece | 15 th Constanta, Romania. |
| 8 th Juvaskula, Finland | |

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