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Collaboration between dental faculties and National Dental Associations (NDAs) within the World Dental Federation-European Regional Organization zone: an NDAs perspective.

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#### Source

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#### Abstract

Although improvements in certain oral health measures have been achieved, many global oral health matters and challenges exist. Collaborations and partnerships among various institutions are crucial in solving such problems. The main aim of the present study was to analyse the nature and extent of the partnership between dental faculties and National Dental Associations (NDAs). A questionnaire was developed, focusing on the relationship between NDAs and dental faculties within the World Dental Federation-European Regional Organization (FDI-ERO) zone with regard to major professional activities, such as dental education (both undergraduate and continuing education), workforce issues, improvement of national oral health, and science and knowledge transfer. The questionnaire was sent to all member NDAs within the ERO zone. The response rate was 21/41 (53.65%). The major activities in which NDAs were found to be involved were improvement of national oral health (100%), followed by continuing education activities (90%), whereas the activity which received least involvement was the development of an undergraduate dental curriculum (52%). The NDAs perceived their relationship with dental faculties to be quite satisfactory in the fields of continuing education, science and knowledge transfer, and the implementation of new technologies into daily dental practice. However, it was suggested that their relationship needed significant improvement with regard to the development of an undergraduate dental education curriculum, dental workforce issues and negotiations with the authorities regarding professional matters/issues. As the two important elements of organised dentistry, NDAs and dental faculties have a significant role to play in the improvement of oral health and in finding solutions to global oral health challenges; therefore, their collaboration and partnership are crucial for this purpose. On the basis of the perceptions of NDAs regarding their relationship with dental faculties, it can be concluded that their partnership can and should be further improved.