

## Conference on Social Dentistry and the role of the dentist in the Chilean society.

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On January 14, the Conference on Social Dentistry was held at the School of Dentistry of the Universidad of Concepción. This was an important activity due to the diversity and current relevance of the conferences, made by outstanding professionals and students.

Talking about the social aspect of dentistry is not easy, since it is one of the neglected areas of the profession. In Chile, when we think in social dentistry, we think in community work that helps people in places with no access to dental care.<sup>1</sup> Although these interventions are welcome, they are far from a definitive solution to oral health gaps and inequities in Chile.

Dental care programs in Chile have a strong focus on curative and technological aspects, leaving aside prevention and community-based oral health programs.<sup>2</sup> The latter are those reported in the literature as more effective in generating community/social dentistry.<sup>3</sup>

Conference on Social Dentistry pointed to this aspects, to the understanding of human behavior and society in which the patient is inserted. During the Conference, the causes of the causes, the health panorama of the continent, the model of counseling, social and health inequities were reviewed. This allowed us to question how we communicate with patients, how we affect and participate in society as dentists.

The dentist must facilitate these processes of change and contribute to face the adverse conditions in which people live. Social changes are a task that commits us all, a common project to gradually reduce inequity.<sup>3</sup>

Labor and oral health conditions have changed. The role of the Chilean dentist and the dental career has also changed. Today our profession faces a moral, social and environmental crisis.<sup>4</sup> That is why it is inevitable to ask ourselves, the dental students, what is our role as future professionals?

To change our paradigms, to see that beyond the mouth, to see people and the environments where they live, to know the contexts (social, cultural, demographic and political), we must understand that our action in health depends on assuming a new role in the Chilean society.

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