



Health promotion

Case Study

Health Promotion Case summary: Love Teeth Day

China has conducted “Love Teeth Day” (LTD), a yearly nationwide health promotion campaign since 1989. The primary objective of LTD has been to increase public awareness of oral health through various forms of health promotion. The nationwide campaign, reaching over 600 million people, provides oral health services, and oral health promotion through mass media, festivals and special activities.

LTD uses various health promotion techniques including oral health education materials, mass media advertisements and community oral health services that include preventive and therapeutic services and special annual activities, such as exhibitions and lectures. Each year the slogan and approach of LTD is altered to keep the population interested and engaged. For example, in 1995 the event was expanded to a one-week oral health promotion effort in Beijing, and in 1996 a one-month oral promotion campaign was launched that focused on expanding oral health education in 11 provinces. From 1997 to 1998 the program embarked on a yearlong campaign directed towards improving oral health care and awareness in rural communities.

Organizers work closely with the mass media to advertise on TV, on radio and in national and local newspapers. Promotion of oral health messages is additionally achieved through large-scale public events. Further, oral health providers are mobilized to participate and actively endorse LTD in their local communities. Free dental services are provided by use of a mobile dental clinic and in collaboration with local schools and shopping facilities that increase awareness and provide needed services.

The magnitude and scope of LTD clearly require strong funding and buy-in from professional and community leaders. LTD is a recognized national event, initiated by the Minister of Health, and is officially supported by nine government and non-government agencies. Each level of government from the province, county and municipal levels



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designs activities for the yearly event and allocate the appropriate funds. Additional support is provided by the dental community with over 40,000 oral health professionals participating in various national and regional events.

Each year a national oral care committee conducts program evaluations to assess the program's effectiveness and measure its impact on oral health outcomes. Program evaluations from China's LTD suggest that improved behaviors have led to improvements in oral disease indices over time. For example, over a 10 year period, use of fluoridated toothpaste increased from 14% in 1986 to 58% in 1996. Similarly, brushing twice a day increased by 20% over the same 10-year period. A survey of 12-year-old children in 1995 reported mean dental caries. However, in 2005 the mean dental caries had decreased to 0.54. These oral health indicators are consistent with improvements in oral health awareness and self care due to LTD.^{18, 19]}

Love Teeth Day is an example of effective oral health promotion on a national scale. Its success can be attributed to sustained support at various levels, established infrastructure, and community acceptability. Yearly program evaluations indicate improvements in oral health awareness, behavior, and caries since program initiation.

More information regarding LTD can be obtained by contacting:
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