

Health Promotion and Integrated Health Care for Children: Role of Paediatric Dentists

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ABSTRACT

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Integrated Health Care for Children

Introduction

Health promotion is an effective tool for galvanising individual and collective health actions aimed at preventing diseases, improving the health and wellbeing of the populace as well as ensuring a healthier society for all. It is the process of enabling people to increase total control over and to improve their health to reach a state of complete Physical, mental and social well-being.

Integrated Health care for children in Nigeria

1. Child Immunisation Programme

Immunisation is aimed at prevention of infectious diseases. The expanded programme on immunisation (EPI) was introduced in 1978 with the aim of providing routine immunisation to children less than the age of two years. The vision of EPI in Nigeria is to improve the health of Nigerian children by eradicating all the six killer diseases which are polio, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, tuberculosis and Yellow fever

2. Nutrition

Nigeria has the second highest burden of stunted children in the world with a national prevalence rate of 32 per cent of children under five. An estimated 2 million children in Nigeria suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Development partners such as UNICEF, Bill and Mellinda Gates Foundation are collaborating with Federal ministry of Health (FMOH) to improve the nutrition of Nigerian children.

3. School Oral Health programme

The Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with Unilever Nigeria signed a Memorandum of Understanding to reach out to ten million Nigerian School children since 2016. We have since reached out to about 6 million school children in Lagos, Abia, Benue, Nasarawa, Federal Capital Territory, Enugu, Ondo, Delta, Rivers States.

4. Breastfeeding programme:

Breastfeeding confers numerous benefits to babies and mothers. Early initiation, exclusive breastfeeding and breastfeeding to at least two years post-delivery are the recommended practices.

Poor breastfeeding is a known associated factor of Noma in children.

The FMOH is working with non-governmental organisations such as 'Save the Children, Alive and Thrive' to improve breastfeeding habits among Nigerians.

5. National Noma Control Programme

Nigeria belongs to the Ten member states under the African Regional Noma Control Programme of WHO.

- a) Hilfatsion Noma, a German NGO is collaborating with Nigeria to build a National Noma Craniofacial Centre at the National Hospital in Abuja
- b) The Ministry in collaboration with the WHO inaugurated a National Technical Working Committee on Noma in 2018 to aid the National Noma Control Programme which is on-going across the nation.
- c) The Sultan of Sokoto, his eminence Alhaji Saad' Abubakar II is the National Noma Champion in Nigeria

Role of Paediatric Dentists

Paediatric Dentists, and General Dental Practitioners can be part of all integrated health programmes of Government but specifically, they can be more useful in child oral health programmes such as School Oral Health Programme, National Noma control Programme:

1. Initiation and implementation of School Oral Health Programmes in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Health and development partners (WHO, UNILEVER, ORAL HEALTH ADVOCACY INITIATIVE, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERS, SMITHKLINE BEECHAM, etc))
2. Treatment of patients from School Oral Health Programmes and Noma control Programme.
3. Capacity building of health care workers /Training of trainers such as primary health care workers for education and counselling and early detection of Noma in collaboration with the NPHCDA National Primary Health Care Development Agency.

Integrated Health Care for Children

4. Capacity building of Community and Social actors: This is in tandem with the National Noma Control policy and Triennial Noma Control Action Plan for Nigeria (2019-2021).
5. Research: This can be done in collaboration with the various Universities and Inter-country Centre for Oral Health (ICOH), Jos.
6. Form an NGO and seek for sponsorship to improve the oral health of Nigerian children.

Conclusion

The process of implementation of various Policies of Government gives room to the Paediatric Dentists to initiate and perform

various activities to improve the Oral Health of Nigerians.

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4. COVID 19 Guidelines for dental practice in Nigeria.

'THERE IS NEED TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX'