evidence

Oral disease: 10 key facts

1. Oral disease affects **3.9 billion people** worldwide[1], with untreated tooth decay (dental caries) impacting **almost half of the world's population** (44%), making it the most prevalent of all the 291 conditions included in the Global Burden of Disease Study[2]

2. Globally, between **60–90% of schoolchildren** and nearly **100% adults** have tooth decay, often leading to pain and discomfort[3]

3. Severe **periodontal (gum) disease**, which may result in tooth loss, is found in 15–20% of middle-aged (35–44 years) adults[3]

4. Severe periodontitis and untreated **tooth decay in the primary teeth** (milk teeth or baby teeth) are among the top 10 most prevalent of all conditions. Combined, these conditions affect 20% of the global population[4]

5. Globally, about 30% of people aged 65–74 years have **no natural teeth**[3], a burden expected to increase in the light of ageing populations

6. **Oral conditions are the fourth most expensive to treat**. In the United States alone, US$110 billion are spent yearly on oral healthcare. In the European Union, annual spending on oral healthcare was estimated at €79 billion in the years 2008-2012, which is more than the money invested in the care of cancer or respiratory diseases[1]

7. **Risk factors for oral disease** include an unhealthy diet – particularly one rich in sugars – tobacco use, harmful alcohol use and poor oral hygiene

8. **Oral disease is associated with significant pain and anxiety**, as well as disfigurement, acute and chronic infections, eating and sleep disruption, and can result in an impaired quality of life. In developing countries, this is exacerbated due to the lack of pain control and treatment not being readily available[5]

9. **Oral disease can impact every aspect of life** – from relationships and self-confidence through to school, work, the ability to interact with others. It can also result in social isolation and reduced income[5,6]

10. Oral health is **essential to maintaining general health** and well-being