



## Editorial

# A happy mouth for a happy future - Embracing the long-term vision for oral health

S. M. Balaji<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Balaji Dental and Craniofacial Hospital, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.



### \*Corresponding author:

S. M. Balaji,  
Department of Oral and  
Maxillofacial Surgery, Balaji  
Dental and Craniofacial  
Hospital, Chennai, Tamil Nadu,  
India.

smbalaji@gmail.com

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Every 20<sup>th</sup> March, we commemorate World Oral Health Day (WOHD). The WOHD 2024, theme is “A Happy Mouth is a Happy Body.” We are reminded of the profound truth that our oral health is a mirror reflecting our overall well-being. But to truly appreciate the significance of the day and context, one must look beyond the immediate horizon and consider the long-term impact of our actions, today perspective perfectly encapsulated by Amara’s Law.

Amara’s law states, “We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run.” With every new technology and findings, we expect short-term gains to be incremental. Most consumer and patient-facing applications will fail, if we do not sustain the momentum long.<sup>[1]</sup> In the realm of oral health, this translates to an initial excitement over new dental technologies and treatments, which may overshadow the enduring benefits of consistent, basic oral hygiene practices. It is easy to be dazzled by the latest ultrasonic toothbrush or the newest whitening treatment, but it is the daily brushing and flossing that lays the foundation for a lifetime of oral health. Similarly, Kryder’s Law, which observes the exponential increase in data storage density over time, can be applied to the accumulation of dental knowledge.<sup>[2]</sup> Just as we have seen hard drives evolve from bulky, limited-capacity units to the sleek, vast repositories of today, our understanding of oral health has expanded immensely. Our knowledge expands or doubles in a very short time. We now know that a healthy mouth can prevent a multitude of diseases, from cardiovascular issues to diabetes, and this knowledge should be stored, shared, and, most importantly, acted on.

Yet, as we advocate for better oral health, we must remember the dictum: “The bait needs to be tasty to fish, not the fisherman.” Our message must resonate with the public, not just the healthcare professionals. We must present oral health promotion in a manner that is appealing and accessible to everyone. It is not enough to inform; and we must inspire action and make the maintenance of oral health as engaging and habitual as the technologies we use daily. As we observe World Oral Health Day 2024 (WOHD 2024), we need to commit to a future where every smile is bright, not just today but for decades to come. Let’s apply the lessons of Amara’s and Kryder’s laws to ensure that our approach to oral health is as enduring as the benefits it brings. And let’s craft our message to be as appealing as the outcome it promises—a happy mouth for a happy body, and indeed, a happy life.

## REFERENCES

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