

Editorial

Oral diseases, especially a high prevalence of caries, periodontal disease and lost teeth, not only affect oral function, but also general health as they are closely related to serious systemic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, diabetes mellitus, digestive system diseases, low birth weight or premature birth, etc.

It is important to regularly conduct an epidemiological survey to know not only the nationwide status of general health, but the status of oral health. China conducted the first, second and third Oral Health Surveys in 1983, 1995 and 2005 respectively, gathering data about the status of oral health status, oral health acknowledgement and behaviour of Chinese residents in order to provide advice for treatment and prevention policies concerning oral diseases. With economic and social development, migration of population and changes in dietary habits, the distribution and patterns of oral diseases may change greatly.

The most recent – the 4th National Oral Health Survey– was conducted over the past three years and was supported by the “Scientific Research Fund of National Health Commission of the People’s Republic of China (201502002). It was organised by the Chinese Stomatological Association, with cooperation from China’s Centre for Disease Control, 35 stomatological (dental) schools or hospitals all over the country and all the centres for disease control in the different administrative areas involved.

The 4th National Oral Health Survey began in 2015, and the main procedures of the epidemiological survey and data collecting were carried out during 2015 and 2016, with the main statistical analysis completed by 2017.

The 4th National Oral Health Survey is the most comprehensive oral health survey to date in China and was strictly conducted according to the procedures and criteria recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), including all 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities of the Chinese mainland and more than 170,000 subjects covering all age groups.

The results from the 4th National Oral Health Survey are published in this and the next issue of Chinese Journal of Dental Research as two special issues, with all the manuscripts contributed by specialists in preventive dentistry from key stomatological schools in China. Such a large sample data will be extremely valuable for policy makers and researchers in the related fields.

In this issue, the first manuscript by Lu et al describes the overall introduction and methodology of the 4th National Oral Health Survey. Others include dental caries in 3 to 5-year-old children, teenagers, the middle-aged and elderly populations, the periodontal status of adolescents, and dental fluorosis prevalence and risk factors, respectively.

We hope they are helpful and interesting to you!

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