
Globalization in Dentistry?

Dear Reader,

Every day, we are aware of living in the era of globalization with all its peculiarities. The internet and the use of computers have fundamentally changed the habits of almost the entire population of the world, and dentistry is, of course, deeply involved in and affected by these changes.

Now it is much easier to communicate in real time and stay in touch with colleagues, sharing with them data and experiences from clinical and lab work. Up until just a few years ago, in order to keep up on dental research and practice, it was mandatory to attend several international congresses a year, and wait for the latest issue of well-known dental journals. Today, however, it is possible to obtain information from dental journals and share preliminary data with colleagues through the worldwide web in a much shorter time.

For all these reasons and more, dental research is undergoing organizational changes, including the establishment of some international scientific networks. An international scientific network can be created at different levels, starting with cooperation at undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD levels, based on the exchange of students and professors. At the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, the exchange of students can be very beneficial in terms of general and dental experience. It can also facilitate the recognition of a title acquired abroad by another country. When this international cooperation works properly at the PhD level, it provides great advantages for dental research: the PhD students must

work hard on their projects, are very highly motivated, and are the perfect bridge between two schools.

The question of how large an international scientific network should be is difficult to answer. It should probably be determined by the common scientific interests and – a factor which should not be ignored – friendship among the participants. At least initially, the network can be composed of 3 or 4 universities, and then later expanded.

An international scientific network can also provide assistance in applying for grants from national and international organizations, for instance, the European Union. Often, one of the most important requirements for application is to be part of an international group. Other advantages include mutual help in organizing meetings and congresses, and attracting interest from the industry to support dental research projects.

In short, now is not the time to pull up the drawbridge and stay in the castle, pretending globalization isn't happening. The internet has already penetrated the fortress; we are obliged to share our knowledge with others, and everyone will profit if we promote a friendly and cooperative atmosphere.

Sincerely yours,



Professor Marco Ferrari