

WHO Best Buys for Oral Health

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Short project description (max. 400 words)

Oral diseases such as dental caries, periodontal disease, tooth loss and cancer of the mouth and throat are one of the largest preventable disease burdens on society: They are among the 10 most common diseases worldwide and currently affect more than 3.5 billion people. Prevalence Dental caries is on the rise in many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Dental diseases caused worldwide treatment costs of \$ 357 billion and productivity losses of \$ 188 billion in 2015. In high-income countries (HICs) they are one of the three most expensive diseases. In LMICs, out-of-pocket expenditures for oral care often cause catastrophic health expenditures and poverty.

Given this unsatisfactory situation, governments adopted a ground-breaking resolution on oral health at the WHO Executive Board meeting in January 2021. WHO and Member States are now tasked with developing a long-awaited global strategy, action plan and monitoring framework for oral health. A central point of attention is the development of “Best Buys for Oral Health” to prioritize effective interventions to promote good oral health.

The proposed project seeks to address the following research questions:

1. Prioritization: What are appropriate public health and clinical interventions to effectively promote oral health?
2. Cost-effectiveness-analysis: Which oral health interventions should be included in an essential package for oral care? To what extent do prioritized interventions differ between different geographic regions and macroeconomic context?
3. Implementation: How can Best Buys for Oral Health be implemented in country-level policy process (LMICs, HICs)?

Cooperating partners: WHO Oral Health Programme