

Continuing dental education in Mexico: a strategy of the Health Education System for Well-Being (SiESABI)

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Dear Editor:

The integration of oral health into primary health care represents a structural challenge for public health systems, particularly in contexts where a large proportion of the population lacks social security coverage. In this context, the Health Education System for Well-Being (SiESABI)—a platform managed by the Public Health Services of the Mexican Social Security Institute for Well-being (IMSS-BIENESTAR)—has promoted educational strategies to improve the competencies of health personnel across the three levels of care (1,2).

As part of the implemented educational strategies, the virtual course “Dentistry for Primary Health Care Personnel” was developed in collaboration with the School of Dentistry of the Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero. Aimed at personnel without specialized training in stomatology, its objective is to strengthen competencies for the timely identification of oral pathologies, appropriate referral, and interdisciplinary collaborative practice. The course was structured into nine modules covering key theoretical and clinical content, including the relationship between oral health and chronic diseases, as well as care pathways according to life stages and community contexts. It incorporated a diagnostic assessment, a final examination with a minimum score of 8, and a satisfaction survey, thereby ensuring a rigorous and relevant pedagogical framework. Since its launch in October 2022 through November 2024, the course has reached 10,821 registrations and achieved a 66% completion rate, consolidating itself as a widely adopted educational offering within SiESABI (3–5).

In addition, the “Permanent Oral Health Seminar” was consolidated, with 28 sessions conducted and 46,436 successful training sessions recorded through November 2024 (5,6). These synchronous, brief, live-streamed open-microphone sessions are delivered by specialists in stomatology and professionals with experience in public health. Moreover, the content is available on the SiESABI platform for asynchronous access by participants who were unable to attend the scheduled sessions, significantly expanding access to continuing education for health personnel (7). Currently, this seminar is coordinated

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from the IMSS-BIENESTAR central offices in Mexico City, in collaboration with the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control of the Ministry of Health, which has strengthened its reach and alignment with national oral health promotion strategies.

Both initiatives align with the Health Care Model for Well-being, which promotes comprehensive, people-centered care with an intercultural approach (8). Within this framework, the systematic inclusion of oral health allows progress toward more equitable universal coverage.

Nevertheless, these experiences faced significant challenges. Adapting dental content for non-specialized audiences required reformulating clinical approaches into accessible and culturally appropriate language. Additionally, technical barriers persisted, such as connectivity in rural areas and limited availability of health personnel to complete the training sessions. Addressing these obstacles was key to the model's success and constitutes a replicable learning experience.

We believe that these initiatives represent a viable model for other public health systems seeking to integrate oral health into primary medical care. Their free-of-charge nature and accessible format have enabled participation by private-sector professionals, thereby broadening their impact.

The SiESABI experience demonstrates that it is possible to transform oral health training from a public policy perspective using digital tools, interinstitutional partnerships, and a practical approach (9). Far from being an isolated action, this represents an articulated strategy that promotes a structural shift in the conception of continuing health education, including oral health. Even though online education enables large-scale and sustained training, it is essential to complement it with in-person education that fosters the development of practical skills and promotes positive attitudes oriented toward high-quality care (10).

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All authors contributed to the preparation and approval of the manuscript.

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