



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

2022–2024

DENTAL HYGIENE RESEARCH AGENDA

Canadian Dental Hygienists Association

JULY 2022

Foreword

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) is pleased to present our 2022–2024 Dental Hygiene Research Agenda. Strengthening and promoting dental hygiene research is of key importance to the profession and to the broader health care system. Evidence from dental hygiene research expands the body of knowledge and allows us to better understand and meet the evolving and complex oral health needs of people in Canada, enhancing their overall health and well-being through informed clinical and therapeutic decisions and actions.

Our research stakeholders tell us that the three primary research domains identified in CDHA's 2015–2021 research agenda remain relevant to the current and future contexts. These domains are as follows:

1. Risk assessment and management
2. Access to care and unmet needs
3. Capacity building of the profession

Whereas no major changes to these domains are recommended at this time, the 2022–2024 research agenda proposes new sub-topics within these primary domains in response to emerging national issues and challenges. The most notable example is the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for oral and overall health care. Other developments, such as rising rates of vaping and cannabis use among the Canadian population, also warrant rigorous scientific assessment.

This research agenda is intended to direct the profession's research efforts and facilitate discussion and engagement among clinicians, scientists and knowledge users with expertise in oral health.

As a national professional association, CDHA disseminates research on topics that fall under these three domains through:

- professional development offerings to Canada's dental hygiene workforce (e.g., webinars focused on specific practice issues, workshops, national conferences)

- knowledge translation tools (e.g., position papers and statements on critical and emerging issues related to oral health and dental hygiene; the *Canadian Journal of Dental Hygiene*)

CDHA, through the Canadian Foundation for Dental Hygiene Research and Education (CFDHRE), also grants funding to enable and enhance Canadian dental hygiene research in these areas.

CDHA thanks members of our Research Advisory Committee for their insights, expertise, and advice, which have shaped this updated research agenda.

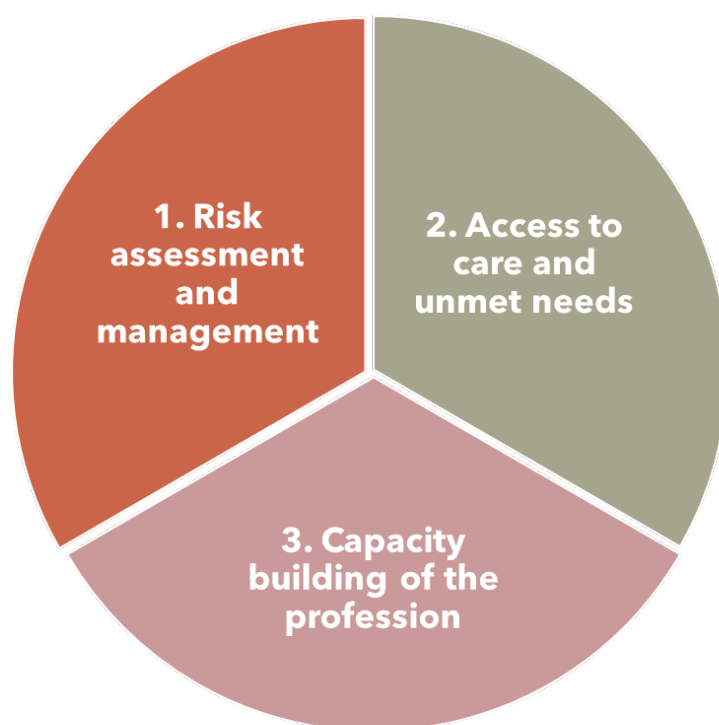
CDHA also thanks all those working in dental hygiene research roles (i.e., research investigators, knowledge users, research funders, students, policymakers, and others) for their continued engagement. In fall 2021, CDHA invited our research stakeholders to participate in a poll to gather perspectives on priorities for future dental hygiene research in Canada. The poll was distributed widely to dental hygienists and other professionals working in research, oral health, and other related settings. While the research agenda focusses on dental hygiene-specific research, CDHA was interested in the views of the broader oral health and health research communities as well. The findings from this poll, available on cdha.ca, were considered in the drafting of this latest research agenda.

While this agenda acknowledges the realities and issues that have shaped the dental hygiene profession since 2015, a key next step will be the development of a research agenda with a longer-term path beyond what is outlined here. CDHA is committed to ongoing engagement with the dental hygiene, oral health and health research communities, CDHA members, and others to craft a research agenda for 2024 and beyond.

Research Themes and Priorities

The following section articulates a national vision for dental hygiene research investigations, collaborations, and investments.

For the reader's convenience, new concepts and topics that have emerged since the release of the 2015–2021 agenda are identified with an asterisk (*).



1. Risk assessment and management

- Periodontal diseases, caries, oral-pharyngeal cancer, quality of life assessments and treatment planning
- Inflammation
- Impact of aging
- Adjunctive therapies
- Behaviour change (tobacco cessation, vaping*, cannabis*, nutritional counselling, motivational interviewing)
- Identification of populations at risk
- Clinical dental hygiene (assessments, interventions, continuity of care)*
- Oral-systemic links*
- Dental hygiene care for populations at risk (e.g., clients with cancer or dementia)*
- Pandemic and post-pandemic*

2. Access to care and unmet needs

- Healthy public policies to address complex issues
- Seniors and aging
- Long-term care homes and other congregative living settings*
- Indigenous peoples and communities
- Low-income individuals, families, and communities
- Other vulnerable population groups with unmet oral health needs
- Publicly funded dental/oral health programs in Canada*
- Cultural competency, diversity, and inclusion*
- Health economics*
- Cost-effectiveness of dental hygiene care*
- Teledentistry and related technologies*

3. Capacity building of the profession

- DH degree vs. diploma
- National standards
- Interprofessional collaboration
- Optimizing/advancing scope of practice
- Higher education
- Evidence-based dental hygiene practice*
- Pandemic preparedness, response, and resilience against future outbreaks and infectious disease threats*
- Health and wellness of the clinical practitioner/workforce*
- Workplace health and safety*
- Research experience in undergraduate curricula*
- Health systems, policy, and education*
- Oral health workforce (alternate practice settings, workforce capacity)*

*Denotes new concepts and topics identified since the publication of the 2015-2021 agenda

Stay Connected

CDHA has resources and programs to support those who wish to contribute to and learn from the latest in dental hygiene and oral health research and education, including:

- a suite of credible, high-quality [professional development offerings](#) on a variety of timely and important topics for dental hygienists.
- [position papers and statements](#) on critical issues relating to oral health and dental hygiene practice. These resources synthesize and analyze the available evidence on a given topic and develop recommendations to inform policy, programs, and dental hygiene practice. CDHA's latest position papers examine oral-systemic links and the relationship between periodontal disease and adverse pregnancy outcomes, respiratory diseases, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.
- the [Canadian Journal of Dental Hygiene](#), which was formally accepted into MEDLINE in October 2020, placing it in the top tier of peer-reviewed biomedical publications globally.
- the [Canadian Foundation for Dental Hygiene Research and Education](#), which provides research grants to support Canadian dental hygienists in building the profession's body of knowledge, improving dental hygiene education, and developing research-enhanced dental hygiene practice to ensure optimum oral health across the lifespan.

Follow CDHA's dental hygiene research agenda at cdha.ca/research or email us at info@cdha.ca.