



Revista Estomatológica Herediana

ISSN: 1019-4355

ISSN: 2225-7616

faest.revista@oficinas-upch.pe

Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia

Perú

102202501

Juárez-Medel, Carlos Alberto; González-Rojas,
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The role of dentistry in public health: multidisciplinary
experience in the Mexican Federal Public Administration
Revista Estomatológica Herediana, vol. 35, no. 1, 2025, January-March, pp. 79-81
Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia
Lima, Perú

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20453/reh.v35i1.5909>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=421582744012>

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The role of dentistry in public health: multidisciplinary experience in the Mexican Federal Public Administration

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Received: October 11, 2024

Accepted: January 14, 2025

Online: March 31, 2025



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Dear editor:

The experience within the Federal Public Administration of Mexico highlights the importance of dentists' participation in strengthening public health, extending beyond the traditional clinical setting. The lead author of this text has contributed to the development of initiatives focused on education, research, and interprofessional management through comprehensive healthcare delivery within health systems.

During his tenure at the now-defunct Instituto de Salud para el Bienestar (INSABI) [Institute of Health for Wellbeing], as Head of the Department for Research Project Support, he promoted intersectoral initiatives aimed at addressing key challenges within the health sector. These actions made it possible to identify health needs, assess staff satisfaction with training processes, and detect critical areas for improvement, with the resulting findings disseminated through scientific journals. The findings derived from these evaluations facilitated the implementation of effective strategies to optimize the quality of care and strengthen the capacities of the health system, adopting an interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach (1, 2).

He also collaborated in the design and implementation of asynchronous continuing and permanent education courses with both national and international reach. These courses, integrated into the Health Education System for Wellbeing (SiESABI, for its Spanish acronym), facilitated equitable access to updated content through a flexible and accessible platform. Additionally, he promoted the creation of the Permanent Oral Health Seminar, composed of live open-microphone sessions broadcast in real time and stored for asynchronous consultation, thereby strengthening the professional development of health personnel (3-7).

Subsequently, at the Federal Ministry of Health, he served as Head of the Department of Liaison and Dissemination in Stomatology within the General Directorate of Quality and Health Education (DGCES, for its Spanish acronym). From this position, he led interdisciplinary projects in collaboration with professionals in medicine, nursing, social work, and psychology.

Cite as:

Juárez-Medel CA, González-Rojas JM, Moya-Sánchez SG. The role of dentistry in public health: multidisciplinary experience in the Mexican Federal Public Administration. *Rev Estomatol Herediana*. 2025; 35(1): 69-71. DOI: 10.20453/reh.v35i1.5909

His contributions include the proposal of key indicators for strengthening primary health care, developed in coordination with the Directorate for Process Improvement, and the updating of the Clinical Practice Guidelines in Stomatology, jointly with the Centro Nacional de Excelencia Tecnológica en Salud (CENETEC) [National Center for Health Technology Excellence] (8).

Currently, in his role as Head of the Office of Health Education at the Public Health Services of the Mexican Institute of Social Security for Wellbeing (IMSS-Bienestar), within the State Coordination Office in Guerrero, he coordinates training, continuing education, and academic programs for medical, paramedical, and undergraduate and graduate students. These activities contribute to strengthening the competencies of health personnel, improving care processes, and consolidating a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach.

The accumulated experience demonstrates that the participation of dentists in public policy development, research, and educational management is essential for the success of health systems (9). The Health Care Model for Wellbeing (MAS-Bienestar) emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary teams to ensure equitable, timely care focused on the needs of the population (10).

At the international level, these experiences serve as a benchmark for integrating professionals from various disciplines—including dentistry—into the strengthening of health systems. The implementation of continuing education programs, the evaluation of key indicators, and the promotion of collaborative practices represent replicable strategies in other contexts, aimed at improving the quality and equity of health care.

In conclusion, the participation of dentists in health administration and education demonstrates their positive impact on process improvement and on building more comprehensive and efficient systems. This multidisciplinary vision constitutes a key element for addressing current and future challenges in the health sector through the promotion of equity- and population-centered care models, as established in the MAS-Bienestar framework.

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