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The role of schools in improving non-medical determinants for primordial prevention and positive dental health behaviors: Challenges and opportunities for India

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With the changing health care system and increased emphasis on cost containment, the role of oral health professionals particularly in developing countries like India needs to expand into health promotion and oral disease prevention. Integrating oral health into the holistic general health policies and combating their shared risk factors with a single approach is resource efficient. Awareness and hazards of health risky behaviors does not necessarily translate into safe behaviors. This article discusses the challenges in implementing health policies to reduce the health risk behaviors and suggests measures to design effective community school service programs to achieve health promotion. A cost-effective way for motivating behavior change is by fostering emotional empathy and motivational learning at a young age through effective volunteering. The increase in ability to identify with another's experience allows children to engage in more effective helping strategies. Volunteering can provide opportunities to develop a restorative approach such as caring for a sick friend, regularly helping an elderly neighbor. Successfully motivating behaviour change by enhancing emotional empathy and motivational learning at a young age is a challenge for today's oral health professionals. In order to effectively meet our nations challenges and best safeguard, the overall health of today's youth, school-based service programs that demonstrate positive social-emotional and behavioral outcomes could be implemented.

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