Preface

This supplement is based on the papers requested from several countries in the Middle-East and African regions for the International Conference on ‘Oral Health in the Eastern Mediterranean and the African Regions’ arranged by the Faculty of Dentistry, Kuwait University 2–4, December 2003, in Kuwait. This conference was organised under the auspices of the Minister of Health, Dr. Mohammed Al-Jarallah and the President of Kuwait University, Professor Nader Al-Jallal. The World Health Organisation was a co-sponsor of this conference. Altogether 14 keynote speakers presented an overview on oral health in their countries and 67 abstracts of original research projects were presented in this conference.

This was the fourth international conference arranged by the new Faculty of Dentistry and the third conference of the Kuwait Association for Dental Research (KuADR), which was established in December 2000. KuADR was promoted to a Division of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) in 2003. In connection with this conference the East and Southern African, the Kuwaiti, the South African, and the West African IADR Divisions together with the Jordanian IADR Section announced the establishment of the African and Middle-East IADR Federation (AMEF), which had been approved by IADR, in 2003. The first AMEF conference will take place 27–29, September 2005. KuADR operates under the Kuwait University and it aims to promote research in all aspects of oral and related sciences, to encourage development of improved methods for prevention and treatment of oral and dental diseases, and to facilitate cooperation among investigators and communication of research findings and their implications especially in Kuwait and in the Gulf region.

These proceedings of the conference aim to give an overview on oral health in these two regions. Large, nationally representative surveys are rare in these regions, but there are some surveys conducted in all of these countries. Small pathfinder surveys can often give quite appropriate estimates for oral health care planning. These reviews describe the current information available and they would hopefully serve their purpose for all countries in this region, when new surveys are planned and implemented. It is very important to monitor the trends in oral diseases for the development of preventive as well as curative programmes. The trends of the prevalence of dental caries and periodontal diseases should be followed among children because they should always get the emphasis on prevention. Resources are always limited, especially in the developing world. Therefore it is extremely valuable to discover new and more cost-effective programmes based on the experiences of different countries. A conference is rarely complete without published proceedings, which will hopefully act as a cornerstone for further development of oral health in the African and Middle-East regions. The reviews are presented in the order of the size of the population in the country.

We express our special thanks to the reviewers of the International Dental Journal in the revision of these articles. The Kuwait University, The Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and the companies, which supported our conference and the publishing of these proceedings is highly appreciated.

We are grateful to Dr. Stephen Hancocks, Editor of the International Dental Journal for his support and for accepting to publish these proceedings.

Dr. Jawad M. Bebehuni Dr. Eino Honkala
Dean Vice-Dean for Research
Immediate-Past President, KuADR Secretary, KuADR