Introduction

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The Sixth World Workshop on Oral Health and Disease in AIDS was held in Beijing, April 21-24, 2009. The location for this latest workshop in the 20-year series was chosen because of the size, demographics, and challenges of the AIDS epidemic in Asia and China.

The main goals of the workshop were to bring together clinicians and laboratory scientists interested in HIV/AIDS-related oral manifestations to share global perspectives, knowledge and understanding of oral health and disease in HIV infection, and to identify research needs taking into account worldwide perspectives and opportunities. It followed 5 successful workshops, held in San Diego, California (1986); San Francisco, California (1992); London, United Kingdom (1996); Skukuza, South Africa (2000); and Phuket, Thailand (2004). It was attended by 170 participants from 25 countries. The structure was similar to the previous two workshops, covering the global epidemic, pathogenesis, the immune response, epidemiology, and HIV transmission in the dental setting.

The aims of this workshop were

- To bring together clinicians and nonclinical scientists who have an interest in the oral manifestations of HIV disease, whether clinical mechanisms or treatment
- To share worldwide perspectives, knowledge, and understanding of oral health and disease in HIV infection
- To agree on global definitions and classifications of oral diseases
- To identify research needs by taking account of worldwide perspectives and opportunities

Before the meeting, participants were invited to identify topics that required further research, and the International Scientific Committee identified a number of scientific questions in each area. These questions addressed a variety of topics within pathogenesis, immunopathogenesis, epidemiology, clinical research, and social/behavioral research. They formed the basis of 11 scientific workshops, which were given the task to produce papers that identified oral HIV/AIDS research needs taking into account their interest in the oral manifestations of HIV and AIDS and utilizing worldwide perspectives and opportunities.

Each session led to a consensus paper based on recent reviews of the literature and the workshop discussants' research experience in the topic discussed. All these papers are included in this issue and so form the basis of a comprehensive, global, and updated scientific workshop agenda for oral HIV/AIDS research.

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