

**COMMUNITY DENTAL SERVICE,  
DENTAL NEEDS AND DENTAL  
FACILITIES WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO A DENTAL  
PROGRAM FOR CHICAGO; PP. 1-120**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649553402

Community Dental Service, Dental Needs and Dental Facilities with Special Reference to a Dental Program for Chicago; pp. 1-120 by Michael M. Davis & Mary C. Jarrett

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**MICHAEL M. DAVIS & MARY C. JARRETT**

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COMMUNITY DENTAL  
SERVICE

*Community Dental Service*

# COMMUNITY DENTAL SERVICE

DENTAL NEEDS AND DENTAL FACILITIES

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO A DENTAL  
PROGRAM FOR CHICAGO

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CHICAGO

1922

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# COMMUNITY DENTAL SERVICE

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## CHAPTER I

### KINDS OF DENTAL SERVICES

To a large number of persons, dental care still means nothing more than the relief of pain and the preservation of the chewing apparatus. This is true even among many dentists themselves, as well as among the lay public.

**Dentistry a Branch of Medicine.** Only very gradually has a new conception spread. The dentist has been thought of as the mechanic of the mouth. An entirely different conception is necessary for any adequate understanding of the dental needs of a community and of the ways of meeting them. Dentistry as a recognized profession is about a century old; dentistry in its modern conception is hardly a generation old. Within this brief recent period the connections between dental trouble and disease have been so developed as to transform the conception of dentistry from a kind of mouth mechanics to a branch of medicine. This transformation in point of view has been brought about by the convergence of a number of forces. The discovery that a number of constitutional diseases may be caused by root abscesses has aroused among medical men an unprecedented interest in the care of the teeth. The development of X-ray technique has provided a tool whereby the condition of

the teeth and the presence or absence of foci of infection may be determined with an accuracy formerly unthought of. The prompt and sometimes dramatic cures of rheumatism, of heart disease, and of other serious or painful afflictions, as a result of treatment of the teeth, have aroused active interest among the laity. The relation of bodily nutrition to the growth and decay of the teeth has been studied in recent years by students of dietetics and metabolism and by medical men, and has further emphasized in the minds of leading dentists and physicians the medical relations between mouth conditions and general physiology.

Again, from another angle, medical inspection in public schools, as it has become more widespread in recent years, has revealed a startling amount of dental defects. Still more recently the examinations made for the military draft stirred the country by their revelations of the great prevalence of many physical defects, particularly of the teeth.

Finally, actual demonstrations made by a few public spirited dentists and health workers, notably Dr. Alfred C. Fones of Bridgeport, of the benefits of dental prophylaxis among children, have convinced a certain proportion of the dental and medical professions and a certain section of the general public, that practical accomplishments are possible for a not unreasonable expense.

With the advance in the preventive idea in dentistry, more and more effort has been made to reach children of the younger ages. So far as adults are concerned, the public has become more receptive to the idea of preventive dentistry, because modern discoveries in local anaesthesia have made dentistry almost painless, and because infection at the roots of the teeth has been

demonstrated as a cause of ill-health. Fear of pain has been removed and at the same time a popular conviction has dawned that bad teeth may cause illness.

The dental and medical professions have been brought much closer together by the discovery of the relation between oral sepsis and systemic disease. The interest of the physician in dentistry has been greatly stimulated for this reason. On the other hand, the dentist's interest in medicine has been enhanced by his growing realization of the significance of mal-nutrition as a cause of dental disease.

**Dental Needs of Children.** Children and adults present different problems in dentistry because of differences in the kind of dental work required and also in the means for getting it done. With children the emphasis is upon prevention, upon cleanliness, nutrition, and the formation of habits of oral hygiene, and all treatment of dental diseases should be subsidiary to this main purpose. With adults dental work must be largely curative, consisting in repairing or replacing diseased teeth, relief of pain, and removal of infections that cause systemic troubles. Oral hygiene has value, of course, for the adult, and its benefits have been effectively demonstrated; but it is of paramount importance to the health of the child during the years of growth. If the teeth are kept in order up to the age of twenty-five, and habits of dental hygiene are established, there is likely to be little serious trouble from them throughout adult life.

There is considerable diversity of opinion among members of the dental profession as to the frequency of various forms of dental disease and defect, the relative frequency and weight of various causes in the production of dental disorders, the best methods of dealing with