

FIRST WORLD DENTAL HYGIENISTS AWARDS CEREMONY HELD IN TORONTO

The Sunstar Foundation For Oral Health Promotion, in collaboration with the International Federation of Dental Hygienists (IFDH) and the International Journal of Dental Hygiene (IJDH), established the World Dental Hygienists Awards to recognize and encourage dental hygienists and dental hygiene students who have made important contributions to the dental community, their profession or to the general public. The first awards ceremony was held during the IFDH's 17th International Symposium on Dental Hygiene, which took place from July 19 to 21, 2007 in

Toronto, Canada, and the Sunstar Foundation, IFDH and IJDH jointly sponsored the awards ceremony. The award-winners each gave a presentation of their papers as a part of the ISDH official scientific program on July 21.

The award-winners received a total of U.S.\$10,000 in prize money and commemo-

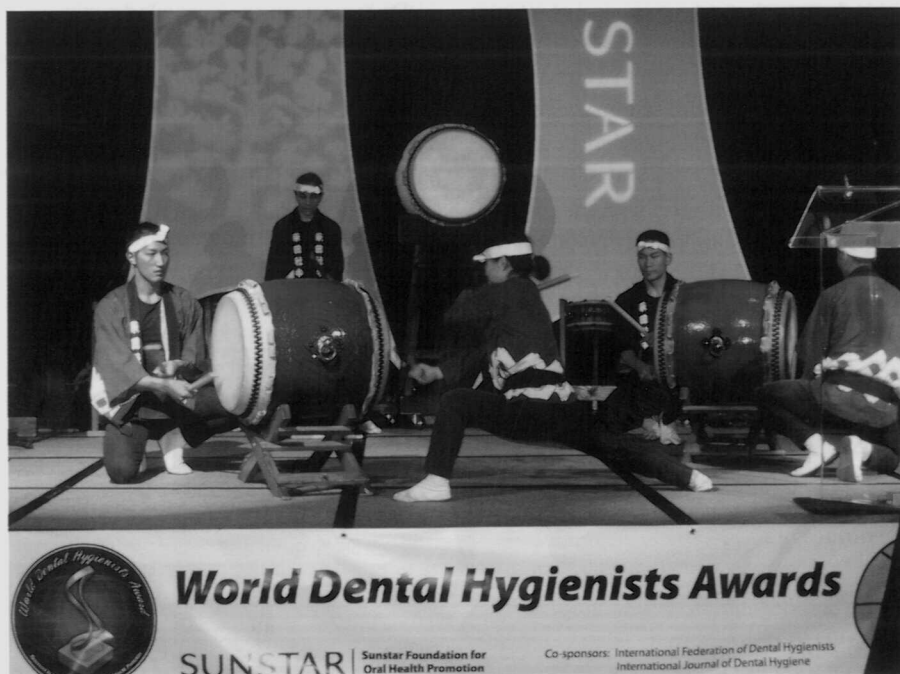
orative trophies. The awards ceremony was held following the Symposium's opening ceremony on July 19, and nearly all of the approximately 600 persons attending the symposium from 25 countries around the world watched the awards ceremony.

Traditional Japanese culture was also on display at the ceremony venue. Attendees were treated to a traditional Japanese *taiko* drum performance, *koto* (traditional stringed instrument) recital, and demonstrations of flower arrangement, origami, and calligraphy.

"Wherever I went at the symposium venue, I was told by participants from many countries that they had acquired a deeper understanding of Sunstar as a result of the World Dental Hygienist Awards," said Hiromi Takaine, Senior Head Dental Hygienist at the Planning Office of the Sunstar Foundation For Oral Health Promotion.

Brigitta Söder and Maha Yakob of Sweden's Karolinska Institute won the award in the Research category for their paper, "Differences in Risk for Development of Atherosclerosis in Women with a High Level of Dental Plaque and Severe Gingival Inflammation." The study was based on data collected over 16 years from 1,676 participants — most initially without chronic gum disease and others with chronic gum disease — who were randomly selected in the Stockholm area. The results reported in the paper were that there were highly significant differences found between the patients and the control group with regard to the amount of dental plaque and gingival inflammation. The key conclu-

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of dental plaque, severe gingival inflammation as well as periodontal disease seem to be associated with the development of atherosclerotic lesions in women already at its early and sub-clinical stage."

In their summing up of the paper, the authors stated their hope that the paper's findings may create the basis for new approaches for prophylactic treatment given by dental hygienists in view of the seriousness of atherosclerotic disease and the costs it incurs to society.

Elina Katsman presented her award-winning paper in the Project category, "The Experience of a Canadian Dental Hygienist in the Dominican Republic: The Story of Smiles." In 1987, she founded the Smiles Foundation in the Dominican Republic to serve the needs of underprivileged children in that country. In 1998, the Foundation was registered in Canada to support the work of its Dominican Sister organization. Ms. Katsman is actively involved in running both organizations. For 20 years, Smiles has been dedicated to improving the oral health and well-being of the Dominican population, with special emphasis on the education and treatment of children. Today Smiles operates seven permanent and five mobile oral care clinics. These clinics continue to be the only ones in the country to offer dental treatments at no cost to children and at less than half the cost of private clinics to adults. The clinics have a staff of 125 employees and 250 volunteers.

Up to the present, over a million patients have benefited from restorative treatments in Smiles clinics. In addition, Smiles also provides education about the prevention of abuse of women and children.

Ms. Katsman's paper tells the inspiring story of how one female dental hygienist determined to help people in need and make a difference in someone else's life succeeded to find a powerful way to help alleviate the pain and suffering of...



A World Dental Hygienists Award was presented to Brigitta Söder (right) of Sweden's Karolinska Institute. Looking on are Marjolijn Hovius (center) the president of the IFDH who presented the award, and Mayumi Kaneda (left), a director of the Sunstar Foundation for the Promotion of Oral Health.



Elina Katsman (left) and Brigitta Söder get ready to present their papers at the 17th IFDH Symposium.

In the Student category, Tomomi Nishimura, Chigusa Takahashi and Eri Takahashi of Japan received the award for their joint paper on "Dental Hygiene Residential Care in a Three-year Dental Hygiene Education Program in Japan: Towards Dysphagia Management Based on the Dental Hygiene Process of Care."

These students based the paper on their clinical experience at a care facility for the elderly. Their paper argued that dental hygienists should play a role in the treatment of those with eating and swallowing difficulties and that "systematic interventions based on professional oral care are necessary in order to assume such a responsibility." They con-



All the award-winners gathered for this photo, with IFDH President Hovius (second from left, standing in the back) and Sunstar Foundation Director Kaneda (far right).

interventions further confirmed the importance of professional oral care in organic and functional improvements of oral health for the elderly."

Previously, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of its start, the Sunstar Foundation had established the World Perio Research Award, which honors researchers and clinicians who have made key advances in the investigation of the relationship between periodontal disease and the health of the entire body. *