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## Linking medicine and dentistry to deliver optimal health

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Since the beginning of modern healthcare, medicine and dentistry have existed as separate healthcare domains. The systemic separation began a century ago, and health care policy has historically reinforced it. While this separation appeared to serve well for many years, significant changes in healthcare have occurred and this separation is now obsolete and may be harmful. This artificial division of care into organizational silos ignores the fact that the mouth is part of the body. The emergent understanding of how oral health affects overall health, and vice versa, suggests that continuation of this separation leads to incomplete, inaccurate, inefficient and inadequate treatment of both medical and dental disease. We are entering the era of accountability and need to focus on oral and craniofacial health as well as its connection to systemic health, research and education. This will assure the highest quality of care and safety for the patients and the communities. Emerging evidence shows a relationship between poor oral hygiene, cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases - the common link is inflammation. Even though technology and the market are constantly changing, there is one thing which always remains the same - the human concern for health. The strength of overall healthcare in a community relies on an interdisciplinary approach i.e. its integration.