Recently the AADR Board of Directors presented to Council a recommendation for the organization to broaden its name to include the words oral and craniofacial.

This proposed change is part of a broad initiative to help ensure that we are engaged with the very best scientists who are promoting and involved in innovative dental, oral and craniofacial research. Updates to the Mission and Vision of the AADR were adopted to clearly position the organization for excellence in science and to promote inclusivity for all dental, oral and craniofacial researchers.

This is a serious decision. It will open-up AADR membership to a broad range of scientists who are not currently engaged with us as members or as attendees at Annual Meetings, and at the same time, maintain our core membership.

AADR should be the scientific home for all engaged in dental, oral and craniofacial research; this will best position the organization for the future. Over the past 13 years, AADR has experienced a nearly 20 percent decline in membership—even after attempts to recruit new members and to retain existing ones. This decrease is due to the loss of active members, not student members, whose numbers have remained steady and even increased in this period.

This decline is concerning in many ways:

- To fulfill our mission, we must represent a dynamic, interdisciplinary mix of dental, oral and craniofacial researchers.
- To successfully advocate to Congress and the administration for increased federal research funding and for programs designed to advance oral health, we must represent a robust membership that is exploring the full range of dental, oral and craniofacial sciences.
The Board Process

The Board decided to examine why AADR members were decreasing while IADR membership was increasing. Therefore, over the past 14 months, AADR conducted extensive quantitative and qualitative research that gauged member and non-member perspectives on the value of AADR membership, meetings and the name of the association. The research findings form the basis for the final recommendations presented to Council.

In addition, several questions have arisen, which are addressed below.

It’s been suggested that a name change will help AADR more successfully reach scientists funded by NIDCR and other research funders. Please explain.

NIDCR-funded investigators are a key target for AADR membership.

More than half of NIDCR extramural funding is awarded to researchers outside of dental institutions and to those in medical schools, academic health centers and other settings. Historically, AADR’s core strength has been researchers based in dental institutions. While we highly value these core members and wish to retain them, AADR has struggled to reach NIDCR-funded researchers based outside of dental institutions. Market research with non-members has demonstrated that the AADR name is part of the barrier.

We are also limited in reaching investigators involved in dental, oral and craniofacial research funded by other NIH Institutes, AHRQ, PCORI and other industry and philanthropic entities.

The AADR recently adopted a revised Mission and a new Vision. What strategies are being planned to support both?

AADR’s leadership is dedicated to the organization’s future growth through a strategy of “science first.”

Our Mission, Drive Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Research to Advance Health and Well-being and our Vision, Oral Health Through Discovery and Dissemination, demonstrate this.

While the overall strategy will be to focus on the best science in our field, a strategic tactic that will “bring to life” the Mission and Vision statements is adoption of a new name that is more representative of who we are today and who we aspire to be.

The revised Mission and the new Vision will be communicated through a comprehensive membership marketing strategy that will attract NIDCR-funded researchers; attract Affiliate members; retain student members; and update the annual meeting format.

In addition, our parent organization, IADR adopted the following Core Values which align with the objective of being a broad inclusive organization:

IADR Core Values – Excellence ▲ Responsibility ▲ Community

Scientific Excellence: IADR values science conducted at the highest possible levels of rigor, innovation and ethics, across disciplines, from discovery science to clinical implementation to global population health.

Social Responsibility: IADR values the pursuit of science to improve health and well-being for all people, to reduce health inequalities and inequities, and proactively takes actions and positions to improve health.

Scientific Community: IADR values a diverse and inclusive scientific workforce, promotes work-life balance, and supports educational activities and mentoring networks to develop the next generation of scientists.

The potential name, the American Association for Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) is very long; is there a way to shorten it?

The name reflects the scientists and the research we want to represent. It keeps us relevant and connected to the highest quality of science taking place in the field. Importantly, it maintains our core “dental” researchers to preserve our historical identity, while adding “oral” and “craniofacial” to attract researchers who previously did not find a scientific home with our organization.

The name also reflects the results of our research findings; in many surveys, AADOCR ranked as the name that best positions us for the future.
Is the name change sufficient to attract new members engaged in dental, oral and craniofacial research?

Absolutely not. The name serves to open the door and demonstrate our “science first” strategy. The AADR already has top-flight scientists presenting at our meetings and publishing in our journals. The Board will be further promoting the quality of our science and funding additional programs and activities to attract scientific talent as members and as meeting attendees. These strategies include:

- **Publications** – AADR and IADR co-own the *Journal of Dental Research*, the number one journal publishing original reports in dental, oral and craniofacial research, along with the *JDR Clinical & Translational Research*. Yet, many of the scientists publishing in *JDR* and *JDR CTR* are not members of the association nor do they participate in our meetings. These scientists will be targeted for membership and meeting participation.

- **Meeting format** – The Board will continue to modify the style and content to attract the very best scientists as presenters and attendees.

- **Supporting meetings**, such as the Fall Focused Symposium, where cutting-edge research is presented.

- **Rebranding** to attract researchers engaged in the broad scope of dental, oral and craniofacial research.

Why not change the name to AADCR to more closely align with NIDCR?

The AADCR name was explored in the market research presented to Council. Actually, when that specific name was presented to NIDCR-funded investigators, who are non-AADR members, it was strongly preferred over AADOCR. (It is not surprising that the investigators preferred a name most closely aligned with their funding agency.) However, including “oral” is important to our patient advocacy groups with all the oral health sequela of their diseases and conditions. Also, as mentioned above, we want to attract researchers with funding beyond NIDCR.

If AADR changes their name, will IADR?

The IADR has not discussed a name change at this time, but other Divisions of IADR have already expanded their names beyond “dental.”

Why is it important for the words oral and craniofacial to be in the name?

Currently, non-members perceive that AADR only focuses on teeth and not the whole craniofacial complex. The words oral and craniofacial include research occurring in the oral cavity and the connections to overall health and well-being; supports our revised Mission and new Vision; and aligns the organization name with the *Journal of Dental Research*’s tagline: *The journal for dental, oral and craniofacial research.*

Why now?

The NIDR changed its name to NIDCR over 20 years ago and their current and previous directors state emphatically how important that name change was to attract the best science. So, you could say a rebranding of the AADR name is long overdue.

If you have any feedback or questions, please contact Denise Streszoff, dstreszoff@aadr.org.