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## **Inter-sectoral Research Partnerships to Address the Challenge of NOMA**

**Alexandria, VA, USA** – A Hands-on Workshop examining NOMA and its disproportionate impact on patients in underdeveloped countries was presented at the 103<sup>rd</sup> General Session of the IADR, which was held in conjunction with the IADR/Pan European Regional Congress on June 25-28, 2025 in Barcelona, Spain.

NOMA, also known as cancrum oris, is a rapidly progressive and often fatal infection of the mouth and face. It predominantly affects children suffering from malnutrition, affected by infectious diseases, living in extreme poverty with poor oral health or with weakened immune systems. NOMA represents a global inequality and can serve as a sentinel for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). It is entirely preventable if detected in the early stages with appropriate surveillance and research on primary prevention. There is a psychosocial burden on individuals and families and a stigma associated with NOMA and these will need to be addressed using a patient centred approach.

There are reports suggesting that NOMA exclusively affects malnourished children in the tropical regions but this has been questioned. Therefore, there may be some genetic and epigenetic contributions to NOMA in addition to the risks from environmental factors. A recent review by the World Health Organization (WHO) identified the major gaps are lack of integrated and active surveillance systems in endemic areas, limited research into the etiology of NOMA, and low capacity in primary care to promote oral healthcare and detect early stage of NOMA.

This Hands-on Workshop discussed the gaps identified by the WHO, as well as an investigation into the causes of NOMA in endemic areas via a study on the oral microbiome, how to improve capacity in primary care to identify and support affected families, how to engage community actors to promote oral health, and the potential of the latest digital technologies to support surveillance of oral disease.

Organized by Peter Mossey, University of Dundee, UK and Wendy Thompson, University of Manchester, UK, the Hands-on Workshop, “HOW #23: Inter-sectoral Research Partnerships to Address the Challenge of NOMA.” took place on Saturday, June 28 at 2 p.m. CEST (UTC+2).

### **About IADR**

The International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (IADR) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to drive dental, oral, and craniofacial research for health and well-being worldwide. IADR represents the individual scientists, clinician-scientists, dental professionals, and students based in academic, government, non-profit, and private-sector institutions who share our mission. Learn more at [www.iadr.org](http://www.iadr.org).

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