

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Empowering the Future of Oral Health Research

Alexandria, VA, USA – A satellite symposium aiming to broaden participation and engagement in dental, oral, and craniofacial (DOC) research careers was presented at the 104th General Session of the IADR, which was held in conjunction with the 55th Annual Meeting of the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research and the 50th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Dental Research on March 25-28, 2026 in San Diego, CA, USA.

Building a strong and future-ready DOC research workforce requires ensuring that all students have access to educational pathways, mentorship, and hands-on experiences. This session focused on practical strategies to broaden participation and engagement in DOC research careers by highlighting successful academic and community-linked programs that connect undergraduates, dental students, graduate scholars, researchers, and early career faculty to opportunities early in their educational journeys. A panel featuring representatives from pathway initiatives, such as Bridge to Dentistry and Destination Dental School, along with educators, clinicians, and research mentors discussed how their programs and personal experiences have helped students navigate the road to dental and research careers.

Following the interactive panel, participants joined small-group conversations aimed at generating ideas to improve visibility and coordination of existing programs across institutions. A key objective was to explore the feasibility of and interest in a shared, student-friendly directory or digital platform that connects aspiring DOC professionals to research and enrichment opportunities nationwide. It also provided a framework for the IADR Committee on Diversity and Inclusion to sustain collaboration amongst participants beyond the conference by informing future initiatives.

Organized by Simone Duarte, University at Buffalo, NY, USA; Makyba Charles-Ayinde, International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research, Alexandria, VA, USA; and Kimberly Jasmer, University of Louisville, KY, USA, the satellite symposium, “Empowering the Future of Oral Health Research” took place on Saturday, March 28 at 8 a.m. PDT (UTC-7).

About IADR/AADOOCR

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. The American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOOCR) is the largest division of IADR. Learn more at www.iadr.org.

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