

Brief History

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Faculty of Dental Sciences (FDS) is one of the three faculties that constitute the College of Health Sciences.

INCEPTION

The Faculty of Dental Sciences started from a humble beginning in 1974 as a department (The Department of Dental Surgery) in the Faculty of Medicine. The first group of eighteen (18) students was admitted in 1974 to pursue the course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) of the University of Nairobi. To facilitate its inception and growth, the Department acquired and renovated the then building structures for the former Princess Elizabeth Maternity in 1977 with financial and material support from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The aim was to have a university teaching dental hospital. Initially, the Department had only nine (9) dental units, but these soon grew to fifty two (52) distributed in various clinics.

GROWTH TO A FACULTY

The then Department of Dental Surgery was upgraded in 1995 to create the current Faculty of Dental Sciences with four Departments namely:-

1. Oral/Maxillofacial Surgery, Oral Medicine/Pathology and Oral/Maxillofacial Radiology
2. Conservative and Prosthetic Dentistry
3. Paediatric Dentistry and Orthodontics
4. Periodontology/Community & Preventive Dentistry

In 1996, a ward, major and minor theatres were opened and became operational to complete the Dental Hospital complex where even complex oral maxillofacial and reconstructive surgical procedures are performed.

MANDATE OF THE FACULTY

The role of the Faculty is to train undergraduate students to become dental professional of high moral calibre and clinical skills of internationally acceptable standards and who are able to work at the public and private sector health facilities at community level in preventive and promotive activities and independently conduct research.

At postgraduate level, the role of the Faculty is to train qualified Dentists to become specialists in different fields of dentistry. These specialists are trained to conduct research, teach undergraduate programme and provide specialist care to patients. It is worth noting that countries

in the East, Central and Southern African region are also beneficiaries of training programmes in this Faculty.

Since the year 1998, fee-paying students have been admitted for undergraduate training. This has subsequently increased the number of graduating dental surgeons and will go a long way in meeting the global set goals of recommended Dentist: Population ratio. The postgraduate training will enhance the number of specialists in the various dental disciplines in the ever changing world of specialization.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE FACULTY

Through its community dentistry outreach programmes, the Faculty has led the way in efforts to alleviate suffering, reduce the burden of oral diseases and improve oral health by providing free curative, preventive and promotive dental services to the needy members of the public who have little or no access to oral health care facilities particularly in remote areas of the country.

Through Operation Smile, members of the Faculty have participated in the annual reconstructive surgical campaign that has benefited thousands of children and adults with cleft lip and palate and other oral and Maxillofacial anomalies. The Faculty has often been called upon to participate in formulation of national health policies. A good example is the formulation of the Ministry of Health National Oral Health Policy and Strategic Plan for the year 2002 to 2012 in which our Faculty members played a key role in its formulation and subsequent implementation. Our Faculty members have also played a key role in formulating of policies, laws and regulations for standardization of oral hygiene and other dental products.

In the area of research, the Faculty has conducted extensive research in a wide range of disciplines and provided answers to many previously unanswered questions in areas such as fluorides and fluorosis, malocclusion and child dental health, epidemiology and prevention of oral diseases, oral cancer and pre-cancer, oral and maxillofacial traumatology, head and neck oncology as well as socio-cultural influence on oral health.

Being the only institution that trains dental surgery graduates, Kenya the Faculty has played a key role in human resource development for both the public and private sector. Since its inception, the Faculty has trained hundreds of dental surgeons who are now distributed all over the country to serve the needy public. In recent years the Faculty has taken the role of training dental specialists not only to satisfy national needs but also to assist members of the East and Central African countries to meet their needs.