



## The Danish oral health care service for children: an international appraisal.

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Abstract: The Danish children's oral health care service has been so successful in achieving its objectives that it will need to change and adapt in order to survive. It is suggested that the service should gradually become community-based rather than child-based. This process can be commenced by introducing treatment for the elderly, the handicapped and the indigent, converting the school clinics to municipal oral health units. Although it is important that private practice is maintained, private dentists should be encouraged to work in the system part-time, leading teams of supporting auxiliary personnel trained within an integrated system. Eventually, the facilities could form the basis of primary health care centres. The lessons to be learnt from the Danish experience have a wider application to other countries. In developing countries it is obvious that they should first place limited dental resources into public health prevention and only invest in expensive treatment clinics as funds become more available. Manpower planning should ensure that personnel are not overtrained for the needs of the community. In developed countries, increasingly more resources will need to be channelled into adult dental care, and dental education must lead the profession into this new era. Difficult though these changes will be, the stable relationships that have developed between the various arms of the service under the guidance of the Danish Dental Association, will ensure that the profession will survive and flourish for the benefit of the Danish people.

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