Preface

It is a great pleasure to see the proceedings of this conference published in *Caries Research*. The use of fluorides in the prevention and treatment of caries is well established and has been, to a large degree, responsible for the decline in the burden of caries since the 1960s.

This decline has, however, not been universally observed and has revealed a health inequality in populations, with many children and adults continuing to suffer from the impact of an entirely preventable disease. The concept of high-risk populations has evolved and these individuals require additional support to realize the health advantages that others have experienced.

The conference sought to explore, firstly, who the high-risk populations are – either as a result of deprivation or due to inherent permanent or transitory individual risk factors. These vary across the life span and might, for example, include children undergoing orthodontic therapy or older adults whose polypharmacy has resulted in a dry mouth. Secondly, the conference reviewed the evidence for therapies using fluorides, or fluoride boosters, for such individuals. This supplement includes practical examples of how such therapies can be introduced in public health programmes.

The result is a comprehensive examination of the evidence for high fluoride concentrations in both varnish and dentifrice forms, and boosters that may enhance or supplement fluoride (of interest to those geographical areas where high fluorides are not available), and their application both on individual and population levels.

We hope that this supplement, made available free of charge by the generous sponsorship of Colgate Palmolive, will be of interest to researchers, educators, policy makers and practitioners. All these stakeholders are required to work together to ensure that the inequalities seen in caries are reduced and that, globally, everyone can enjoy a future free of dental decay.

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