

## Cultural Issues

### ORAL CARE

- Does oral hygiene depend on a people's culture?
- Yes, and not only that. If we compare the oral health of populations from different countries we may draw some revelatory conclusions on the matter.

**Fatima** presents the situation in **Cambodia**. This country with a population of 14 000 000 has 420 dentists and 250 nurses specialized in dentistry.

There are dental offices in the capital, but not in the rural areas.

Access to dental therapies is unequal.

Dental hygiene in the rural areas is very limited. Polluted waters and the lack of professional dental care leads to loss of teeth and severe periodontal diseases.

The main solution for improving the population's oral health would be education, by instilling habits of oral hygiene such as the regular brushing of teeth.

**Razikina** reveals a completely different picture in the **Comoro Islands, near Madagascar**, where pre-school children are taught to brush their teeth. The toothbrushes are not the modern kind, but local traditional ones, with therapeutic and toning effects for the teeth and gums. These *toothbrushes* are sticks made from palm trees or *Jatropha*, a local shrub. Eating local foods rich in Calcium is also encouraged.

In Morocco, too, there are many people with poor dental and mouth health. The typical diet, the lack of oral hygiene, the lack of interest in it, of education and of information, the difficulty in accessing specialized care, the prohibitive prices and the lack of insurance are among the causes. France should be taken as an example, says **Zahra**.

#### Topics for Forum:

How are mouth health problems dealt with in your country?

Are there any mouth health problems as widespread as to be considered an epidemic in your country?

What approach do you recommend to your patients: preventive or curative, therapeutic?