

# ORAL HEALTH UNMASKED: A SCIENTIST'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE NEGLECTED DIMENSION IN TANZANIA

Majani Edward<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Agyapong<sup>2</sup>, Innocent Paul<sup>3</sup>, Ibrahim Idris<sup>4</sup>, Gbassara Koulagna Boris<sup>5</sup>, Kengo Ezie<sup>6</sup>, Emelia Azeyele Kpiebaya<sup>7</sup>, Shuaibu Saidu Musa<sup>8</sup>, and Lucero-Prisno III Don Eliseo<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of St Francis Leach College of Nursing

<sup>2</sup>University for Development Studies - Nyankpala Campus

<sup>3</sup>Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences Institute of Allied Health Sciences

<sup>4</sup>Kaduna State University Faculty of Medicine

<sup>5</sup>Universite de Yaounde I Faculte de Medecine et des Sciences Biomedicales

<sup>6</sup>Archidiocese de Garoua

<sup>7</sup>University of Liverpool Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics

<sup>8</sup>Ahmadu Bello University Zaria Department of Library and Information Science

<sup>9</sup>London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Department of Global Health and Development

March 15, 2024

## Abstract

The World Health Organization's definition of oral health frames the discussion, highlighting its holistic nature encompassing physiological, psychosocial, and functional dimensions. The current estimates of oral diseases in Tanzania and around the world underscore the urgency of intervention, particularly in light of rising sugar consumption trends. The unique challenges facing Tanzania, including inadequate knowledge, limited infrastructure, and disparities in oral healthcare access, are analyzed within the broader context of sub-Saharan Africa's health priorities. This perspective addresses the multifaceted challenges of oral health neglect in Tanzania, emphasizing the imperative for a comprehensive and integrated approach. The commentary offers a detailed exploration of determinants contributing to oral health neglect, spanning socioeconomic, behavioral, and commercial factors, with a focus on their implications for Tanzanian communities. Recommendations are presented as a strategic roadmap, encompassing public health education, integrated healthcare services, government intervention, educational programs, community engagement, financial accessibility, and research initiatives. By synthesizing these recommendations into a cohesive framework, a proactive and collaborative approach to mitigate the consequences of oral health neglect in Tanzania, emphasizing the need for transformative policies and cultural sensitivity are therefore envisioned.

## Hosted file

Oral afya project final draft.docx available at <https://authorea.com/users/602109/articles/726412-oral-health-unmasked-a-scientist-s-perspective-on-the-neglected-dimension-in-tanzania>