Micro-dentistry is one of the new areas in the world of modern dentistry. Many different terms are used. Microscope dentistry, microscope-centered dentistry and microscope-enhanced dentistry are just some expressions that fall under the area of micro-dentistry. It also includes micro-restorative dentistry.

What is micro-dentistry?

By Tetsuya Hirata, DDS, PhD

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What reaction do you want?

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UCSF receives $24.4 million to fight early childhood cavities

The UCSF School of Dentistry has received the largest grant in its history: $24.4 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to address socio-economic and cultural disparities in children’s oral health.

The seven-year grant, which is funded through the NIH National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, will enable the UCSF Center to “address disparities in children’s oral health” (nicknamed CAN DO) to launch new programs in preventing early childhood tooth decay.

The programs will include new research to compare methods to prevent dental caries in children, as well as efforts to integrate and improve oral health care and understanding across a variety of primary care and social service settings.

The NIH also tapped UCSF as the Data Coordinating Center for three of the funded centers: UCSF, Boston University and University of Colorado, Denver. These three centers are being collectively called the Early Childhood Caries Collaborative Centers. Each center includes two randomized clinical trials, and all are focused on preventing early childhood caries in different vulnerable, high-risk populations.

“Dental caries is the most common chronic disease among children, and it is becoming even prevalent nationwide, disproportionately among children in low-income families and certain minority groups,” said John Featherstone, PhD, dean of the UCSF School of Dentistry. “This disease is very difficult and expensive to treat in young children, but it is largely preventable.”

The 1999-2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, from the Centers for Disease Control illustrated these disparities in children by race/ethnicity with 42 percent of Mexican American and 52 percent of black children ages 2-5 having decayed or filled teeth, compared with 24 percent of white children.

The new programs will assess the best way to reach susceptible young children and their caregivers to prevent early childhood caries and reduce oral health disparities. Early childhood caries is a particularly devastating form of dental caries in young children. General anesthesia is often required for treatment of early childhood caries.

Children in the CAN DO Center. “We have an easy, relatively low-cost strategy of fluoride varnish painted on the child’s teeth — that helps to prevent teeth from decaying and causing children to have toothaches and difficulty eating, sleeping and speaking.”

Weintraub said this funding will enable the UCSF program to forge new partnerships with dental, medical and social care colleagues, as well as with the federally-funded Women, Infants and Children (WIC) health and nutrition program, to create effective ways of improving children’s oral health in non-traditional settings. For further information, visit www.uw.edu.

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