Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care Final Report

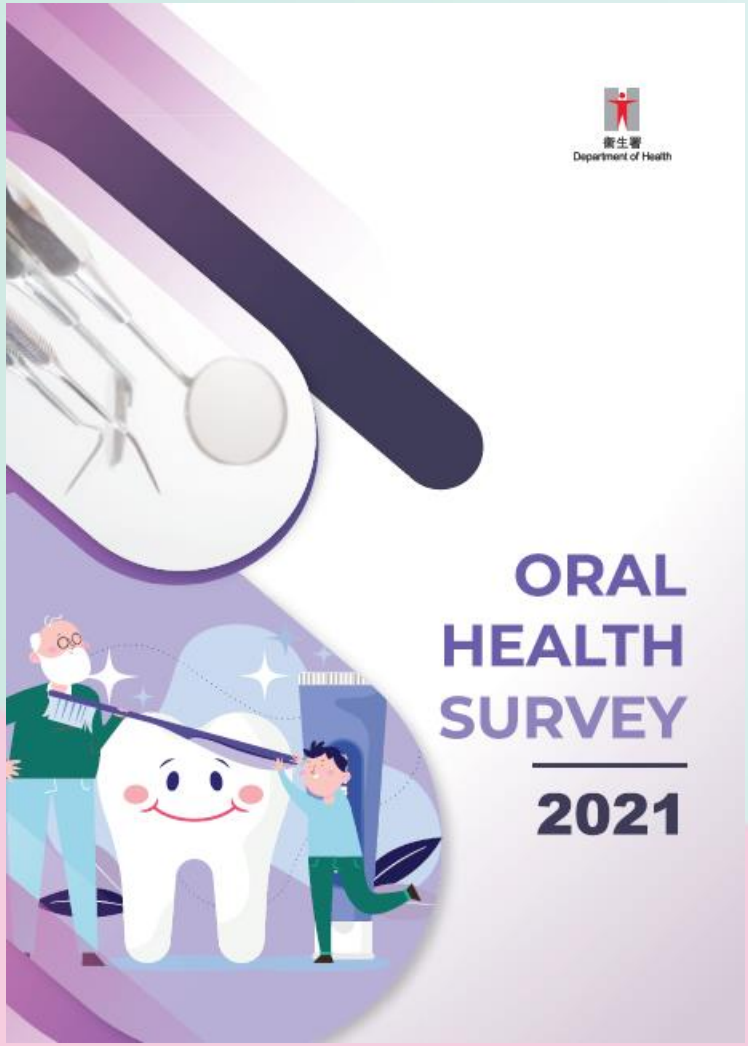
6 December 2024

Health Bureau
The Government of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
of the People's Republic of China

Background

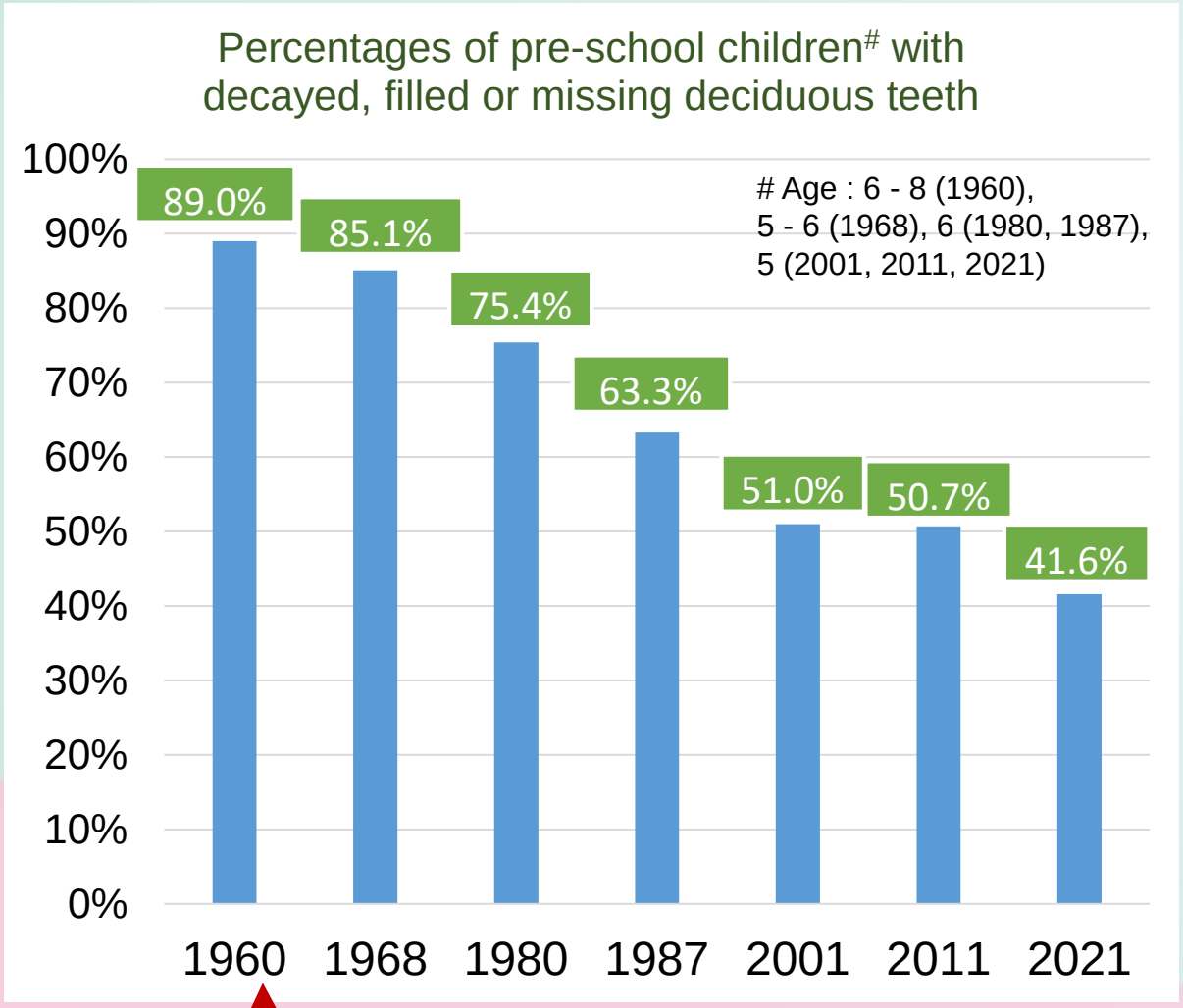
- Establishment of the Working Group announced in the 2022 Policy Address
- Term of office: 31 Dec 2022 – 31 Dec 2024
- 13 non-official members and 5 ex-officio members
- Interim Report released on 29 Dec 2023

Oral Health Status & Risks

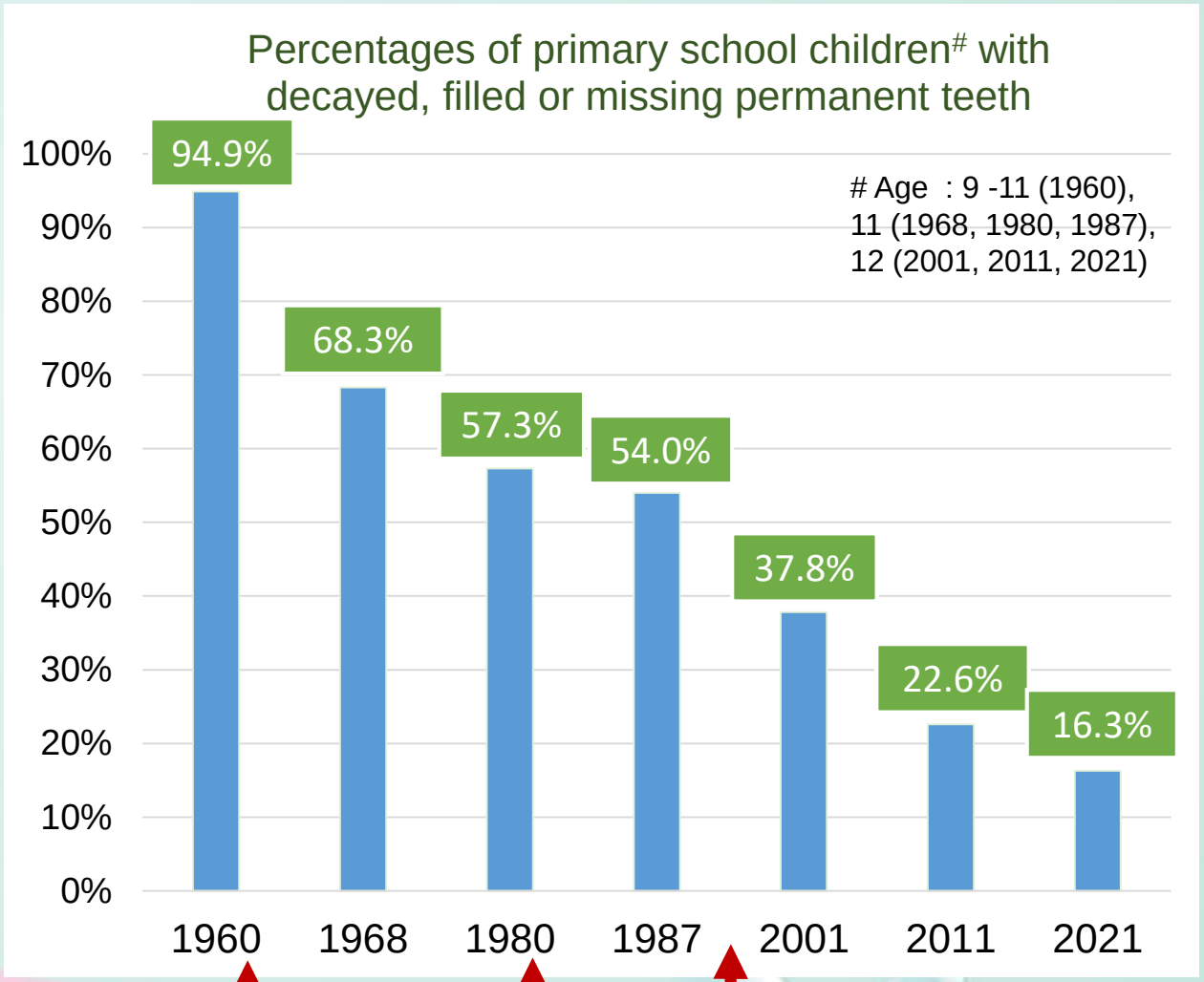


- After 2001 & 2011, DH conducted the 3rd territory-wide Oral Health Survey from Nov 2021 to Dec 2023
- Surveyed 7100 people from 5 population groups
- Shown continuous improvement in oral health over the years, compares favourably globally, but there remains risks of dental diseases

Tooth decay among children



Water fluoridation(1961)



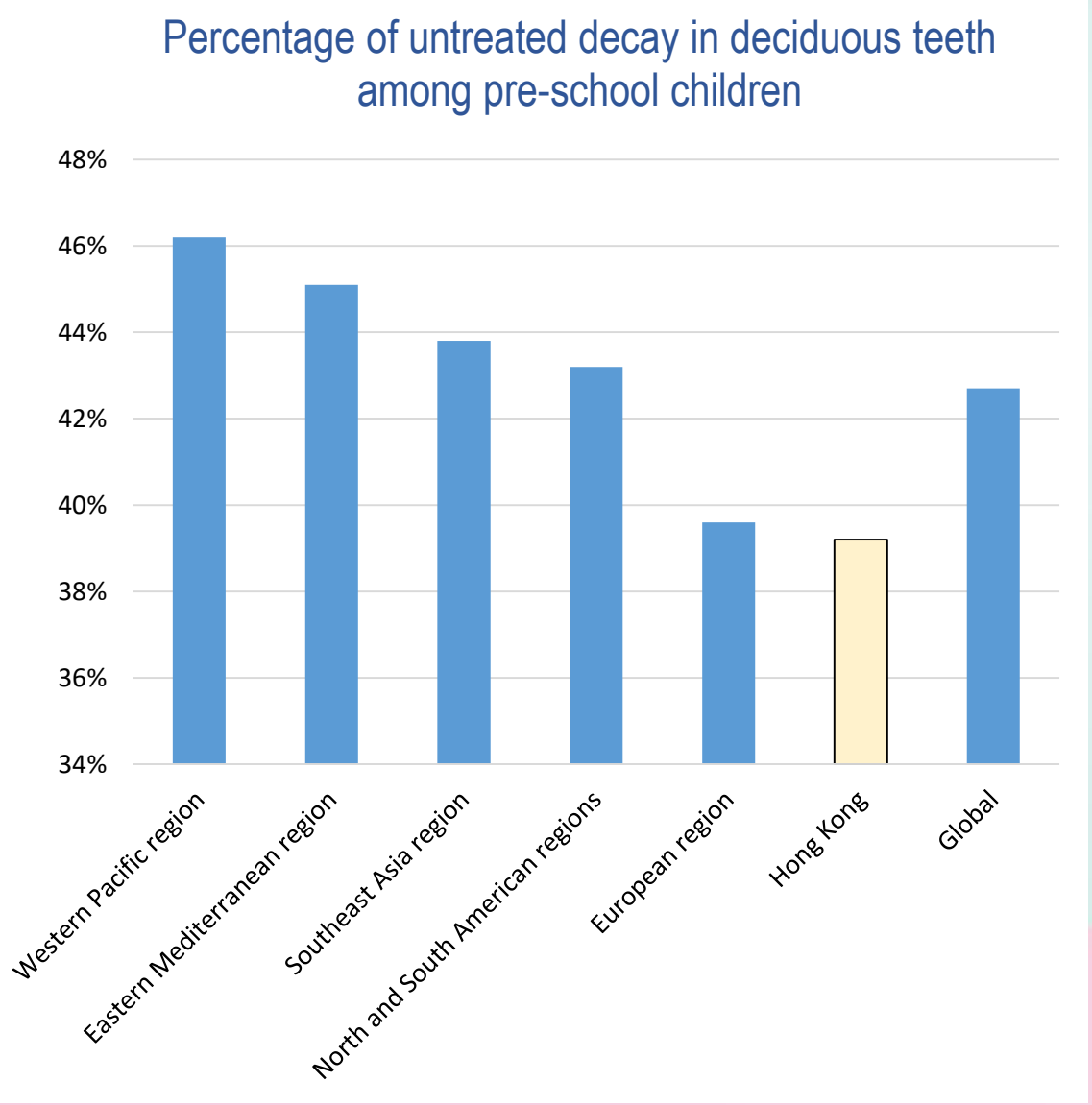
Water fluoridation (1961)

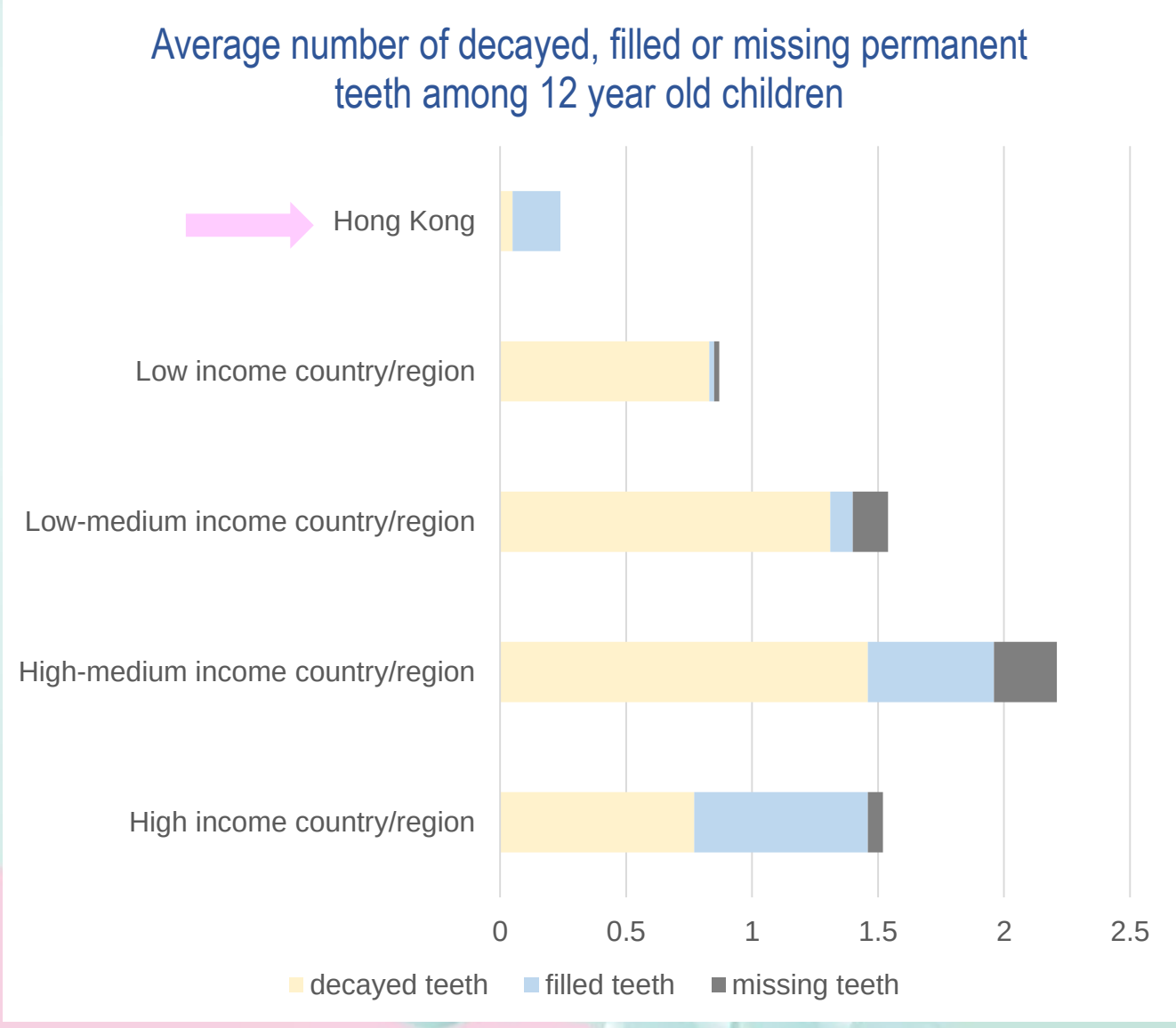
Launched School Dental Care Service (SDCS) (1980)

Enhanced prevention in SDCS (1995)

Source : Surveys of the Faculty of Dentistry, The University of Hong Kong
Oral Health Surveys of the Government

Global comparison of tooth decay among children

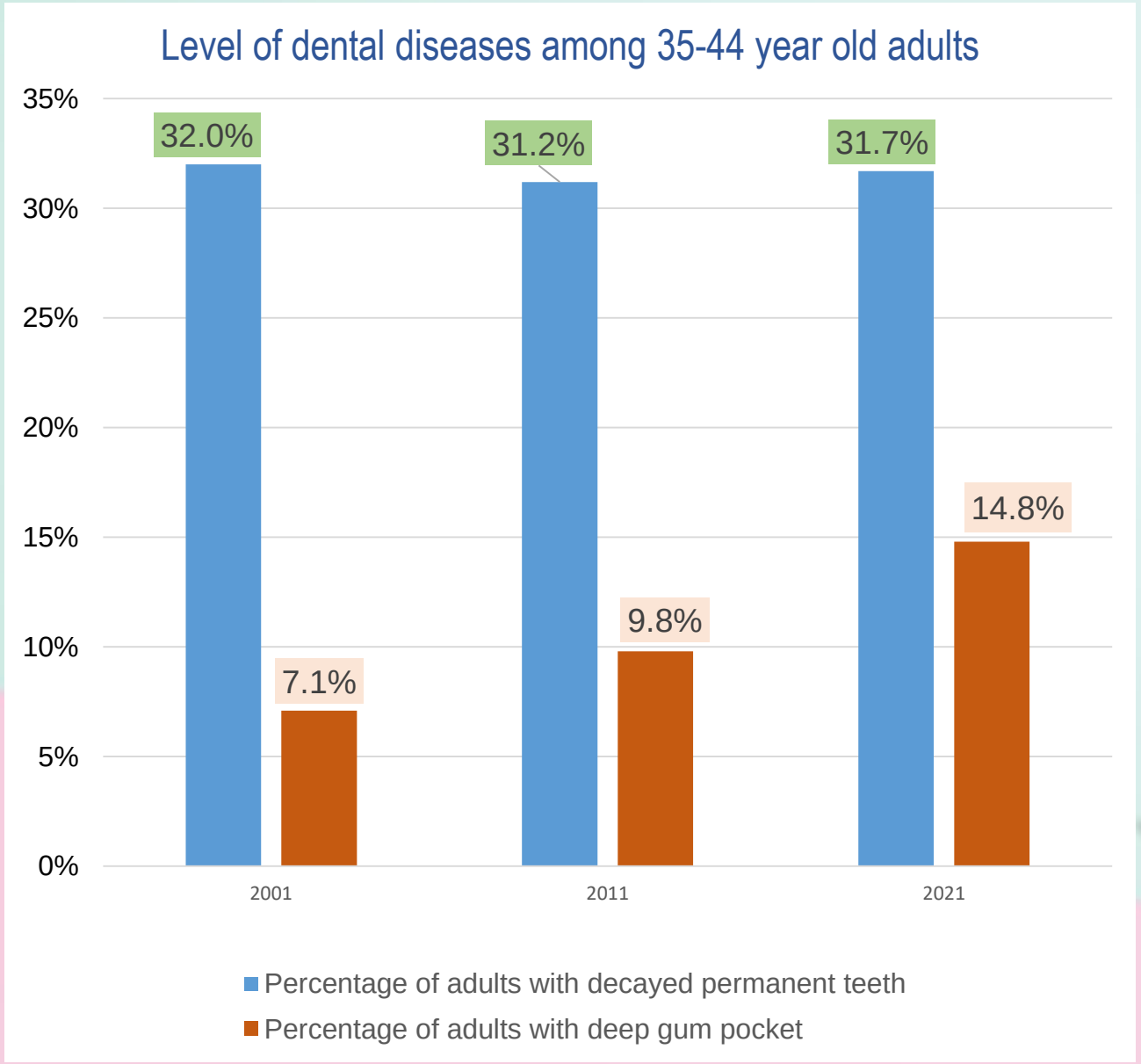




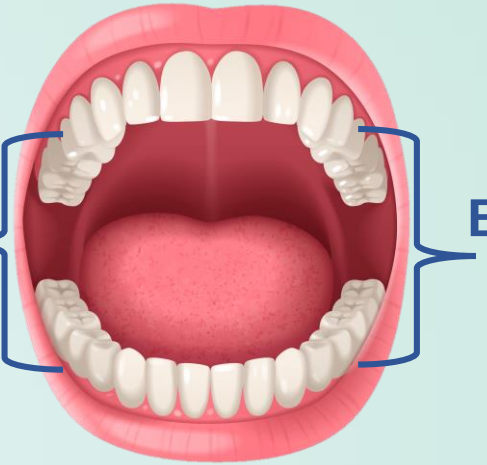
Source : WHO Global Oral Health Status Report 2022
Department of Health Oral Health Survey 2021

Source: FDI Oral Health Atlas 2015
Department of Health Oral Health Survey 2021

Level of dental diseases among adults



Source: Department of Health Oral Health Survey

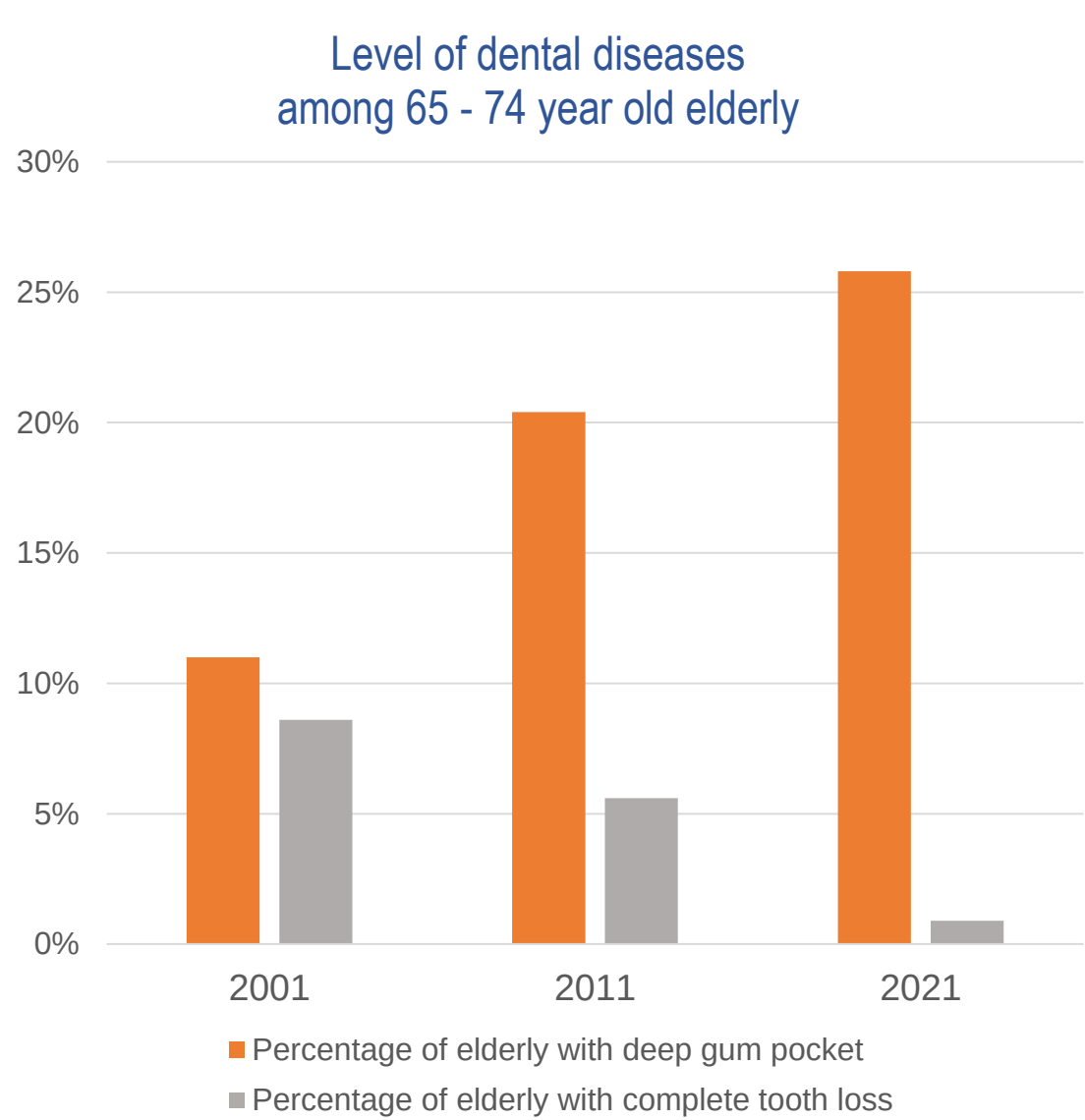


Severe gum disease (deep gum pocket) occurred mainly in back teeth

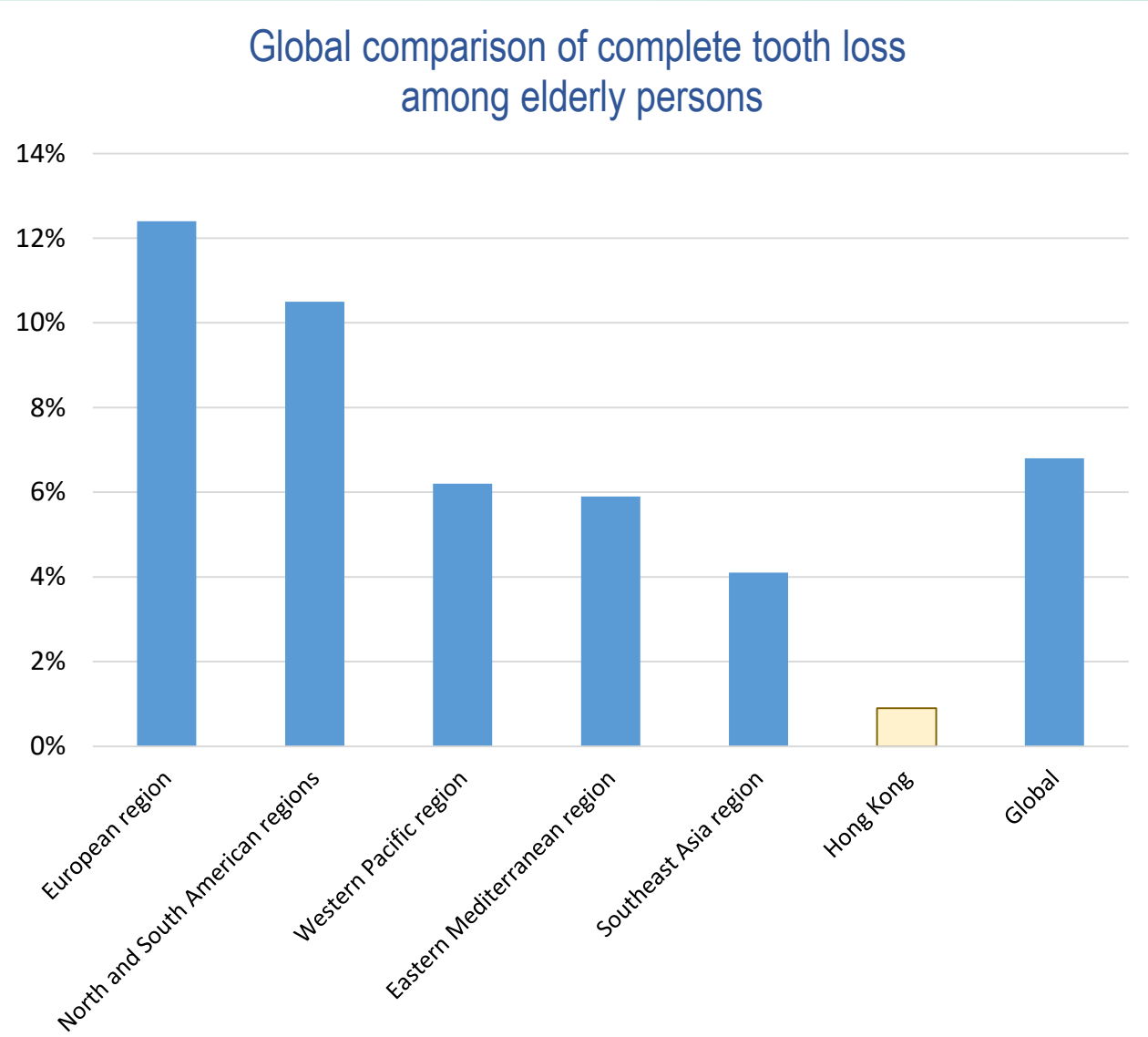
70% adults without daily interdental cleaning

42.7% adults without regular oral check-ups

Level of dental diseases among elderly persons



Source : Department of Health Oral Health Survey (2001, 2011, 2021)



Source : WHO Global Oral Health Status Report 2022
Department of Health Oral Health Survey 2021

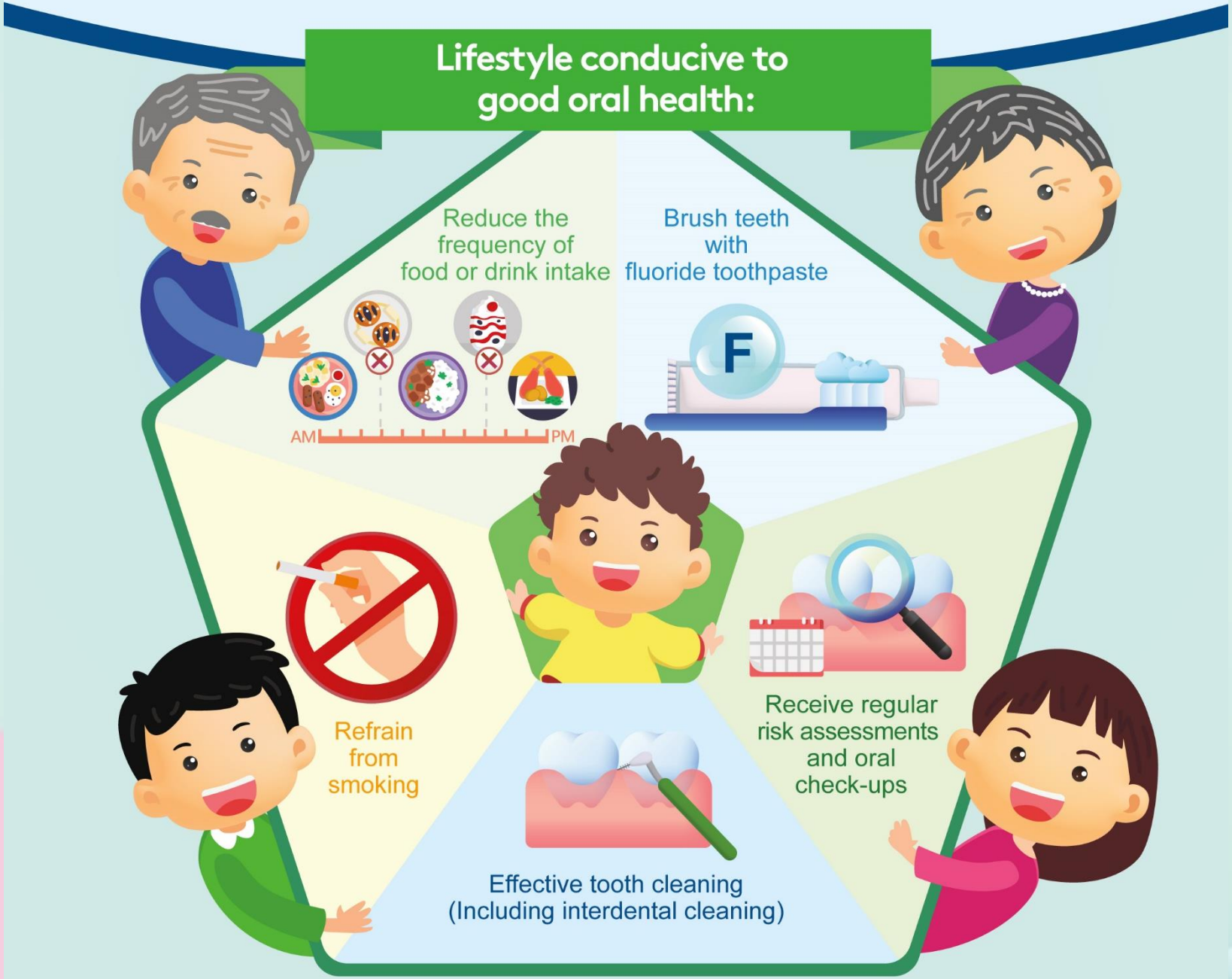
Misconceptions in Oral Health

1 Deciduous teeth will be replaced anyway, so tooth decay is not a serious problem!

2

Daily tooth-brushing is already sufficient to prevent dental diseases!

3 I have no oral discomfort which means my teeth are all healthy, and I don’t need any oral check-ups!


Lifestyle conducive to good oral health:
Reduce the frequency of food or drink intake
AM
PM
Brush teeth with fluoride toothpaste
F
Refrain from smoking
Receive regular risk assessments and oral check-ups
Effective tooth cleaning (Including interdental cleaning)

Oral Health Goals 2030

Age group	Indicator	Goal (no. of teeth)
5 year old pre-school children	Decayed deciduous teeth	≤ 1.4
12 year old children	Decayed teeth	≤ 0.1
35-44 year old adults	Decayed teeth	≤ 0.7
65-74 year old elderly persons	Missing teeth	≤ 8

Recommendations of the Working Group – Oral Health Policies

1. Oral health constitutes an integral component of general health. The Government's oral health policies aim to enable all Hong Kong citizens to improve their oral hygiene and lifestyles conducive to further enhancing both oral health and general health levels;

2. The Government will assist citizens in managing their oral health through publicity, education as well as promotion and development of primary oral health and dental care, with a view to putting into action prevention, early identification and timely intervention of dental diseases with the objective of retaining teeth; and

3. The Government will provide appropriate oral health and dental care services for underprivileged groups with financial difficulties and special needs in a bid to ensure access to essential dental care services by these groups.

Dental services provided / subsidised by Government

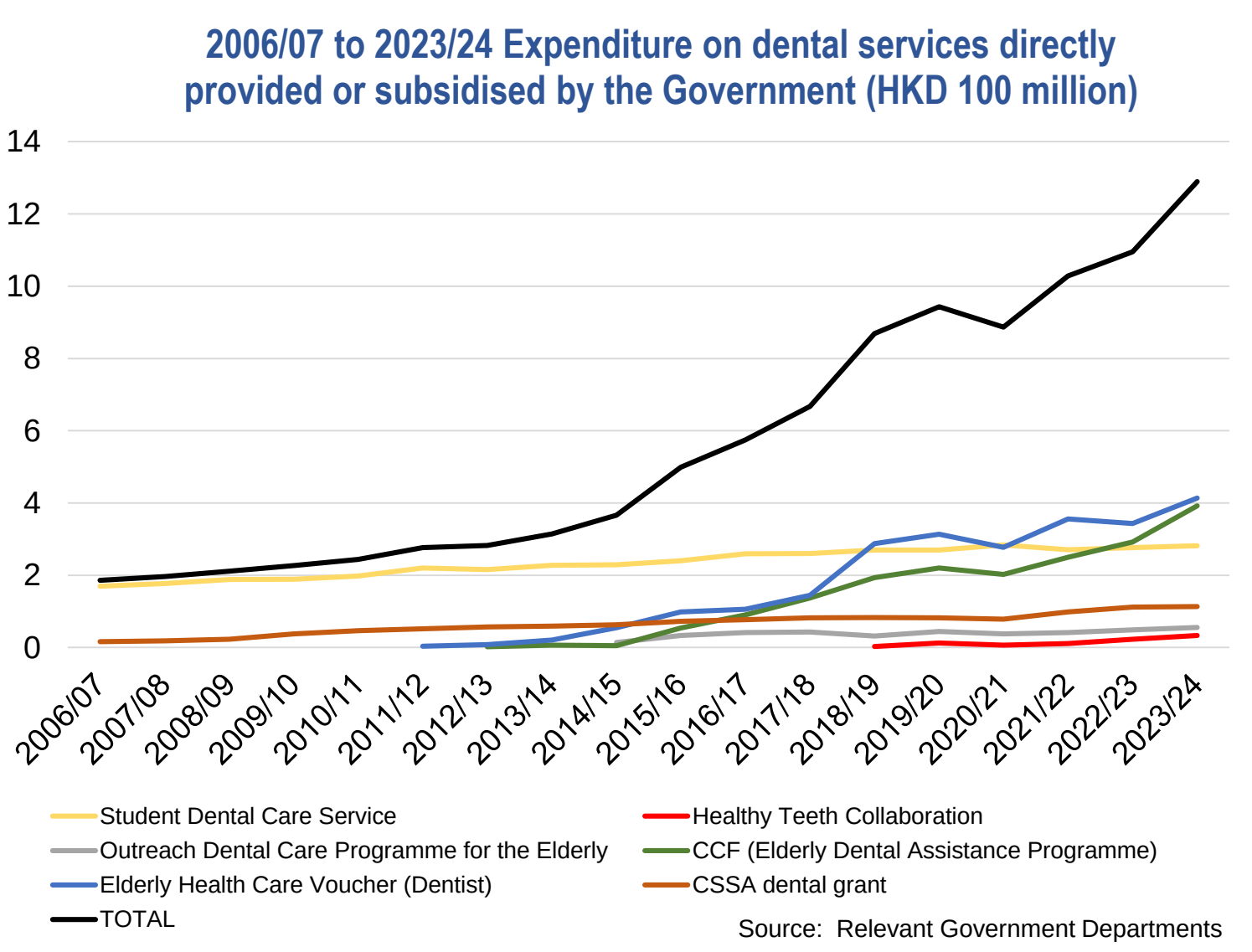
Government provided

- School Dental Care Service
- Hospital Dental Services (Oral and maxillofacial surgery)
- Special Oral Care Service (for children with intellectual disabilities)
- General Public Session Service (emergency pain relief and teeth extraction)

Government subsidised

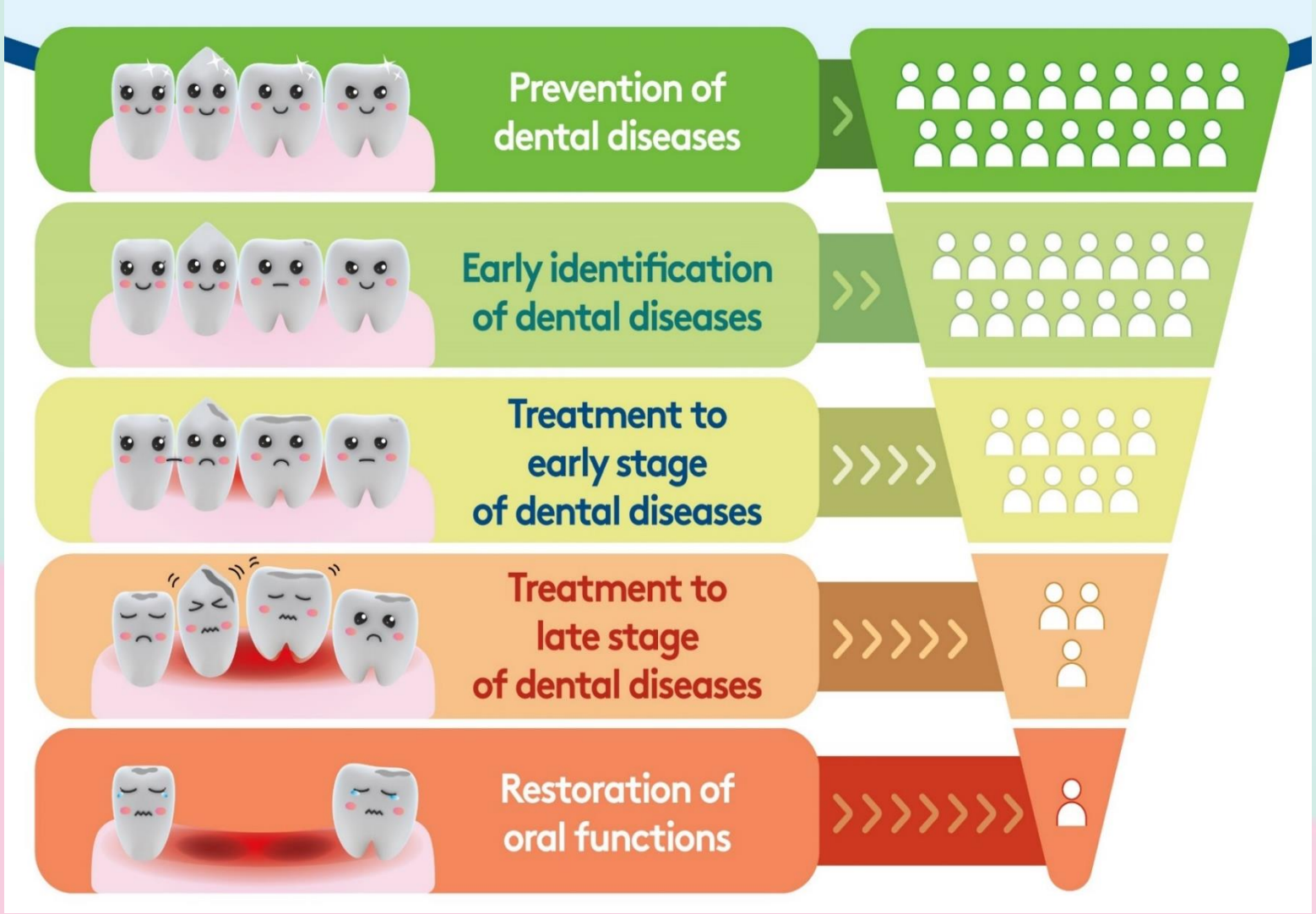
- Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme
- Dental Grant under CSSA
- “Elderly Dental Assistance Programme” funded by CCF (for removable dentures)
- Outreach Dental Care Programme for the Elderly (for elderly persons at residential care homes and day care centres/units)
- "Healthy Teeth Collaboration" (for adults with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder)

Expenditure on dental services provided or subsidised by Government



- Expenditure increased significantly in past years
  - 2006/07: $186.4 million
  - 2023/24: $1,289.6 million
- Elderly Health Care Voucher: highest expenditure
  - 2023/24: $413.2 million
  - service utilisation skewed towards curative treatment
- Elderly Dental Assistance Programme funded by CCF: largest increase
  - 2023/24: nearly $400 million
  - Average amount per claim: $15,000

Recommendations of the Working Group – Future development strategy of oral health and dental care



Community-wide preventive primary oral healthcare

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Essential dental care services targeting underprivileged groups

Community-wide preventive primary oral health care

1. Enhance oral health care in primary healthcare
   - Pilot risk assessment and oral hygiene instructions service at certain District Health Centres / District Health Centre Expresses

2. Extend and strengthen regular oral check-ups and oral hygiene instruction for pre-school children
   - Bright Smiles Baby Programme
   - Outreach Oral Health Care Programme for pre-school children

3. Promote regular oral check-ups among adolescents
   - Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents

4. Encourage citizens to receive regular oral check-ups

5. Encourage elderly to make good use of Elderly Health Care Vouchers for seeking regular oral check-ups

Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents (PDCC)

Target beneficiaries	Holders of valid HKID cards, at age of 13 to 17, enrolled in eHealth
Service scope	oral health risk assessment, scaling, personalised oral hygiene instructions, +/- fluoride application
Fee	Government subsidy：$200 Co-payment by service user：$200 (recommended level)
Launch date	1st quarter of 2025

Essential dental care services targeting underprivileged groups

- Provide essential oral health and dental care services targeting underprivileged groups (persons with financial difficulties, persons with disabilities or special needs, and high-risk groups)
- Prioritise subsidisation according to the principle of prevent oral diseases and retain teeth

1. Launch Community Dental Support Programme (for underprivileged groups with financial difficulties)
2. Continue to streamlining the arrangements of dental services of General Public (GP) session of the Department of Health
   - DH will launch an Online Registration System for Dental General Public Session, and consider introducing eligibility criteria to put the service focus on helping those with financial difficulties
3. Continuous to expand special care dental services
   - Expand “Special Oral Care Services” and “Health Teeth Collaboration”, strengthen special care dental services within hospitals and provide more training

Community Dental Support Programme (CDSP)

Target beneficiaries and fee	Hospital Authority Medical Fee Waiver (Full) (Enrolled in eHealth)	Fully subsidised by the Govt.
	HA Medical Fee Waiver (Partial) / Aged 65 -74 OALA recipients / Recipients of the CCSV with co-payment Level 2 / Elderly users of Home care services with co-payment Category II/ Needy persons referred by Registered Social Worker (Enrolled in eHealth)	Admin. fee: $50 / tooth (Government subsidies exceed 90% of the cost)
Service scope	Oral examination, dental pain relief, X-ray examination (free of charge) Filling and extraction	
Service capacity	At least 40 000 service quota	
Launch date	2nd quarter of 2025	

Enhancing the DH's Dental General Public Session

- Online Registration System for Dental General Public Session will start on 30 Dec 2024
- Queuing no longer required

Increasing dental professional manpower

Current manpower statistics

- Dentist

  2 617 registered dentists

- Dental Hygienist

  615 enrolled dental hygienists

- Dental Therapist

  224 dental therapists

  （government-employed)

Government measures

- Further to amendments of Dentists Registration Ordinance (DRO), admission of qualified non-locally trained dentists, including limited registration (LR) and special registration (SR), will commence on 1 Jan 2025
- DH launched recruitment exercises, first batch of non-locally trained dentists will be available in Q1 2025
- Increase training places of dental hygienists and dental therapists

Overview of existing oral health and dental care system

Age / Dental treatment item	0	3	6	12	18	65+
Risk assessment, personalised oral health advice +/- topical fluoride application	Oral Health Education and Promotion					
Regular oral examination	Bright Smiles Baby Pilot Programme	Jockey Club Children Oral Health Project (Sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust)	School Dental Care Service	Dental benefits provided by employers	Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme	
Scaling					Elderly Dental Assistance Programme funded by Community Care Fund	
Filling						
Tooth extraction	General Public Session					
Dental treatment provided by dentist	Dental Grant under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme					

Overview of future oral health and dental care system

Age / Dental treatment item	0 3 6 12 18 65+
Risk assessment, personalised oral health advice +/- topical fluoride application	Oral Health Education and Promotion
Regular oral examination	Bright Smiles Baby Programme - Maternal and Child Health Centres; Outreach Oral Health Care and Promotion Programme for Pre-school Children; School Dental Care Service; Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents; Promote employers to encourage regular oral check-ups in dental benefit schemes; Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme
Scaling	Affordable dental services provided by NGOs and private sectors (leverage on the service capacity of dental care professionals)
Filling	Community Dental Support Programme (for underprivileged groups)
Tooth extraction	General Public Session
Dental treatment provided by dentist	Dental Grant under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

Q & A session

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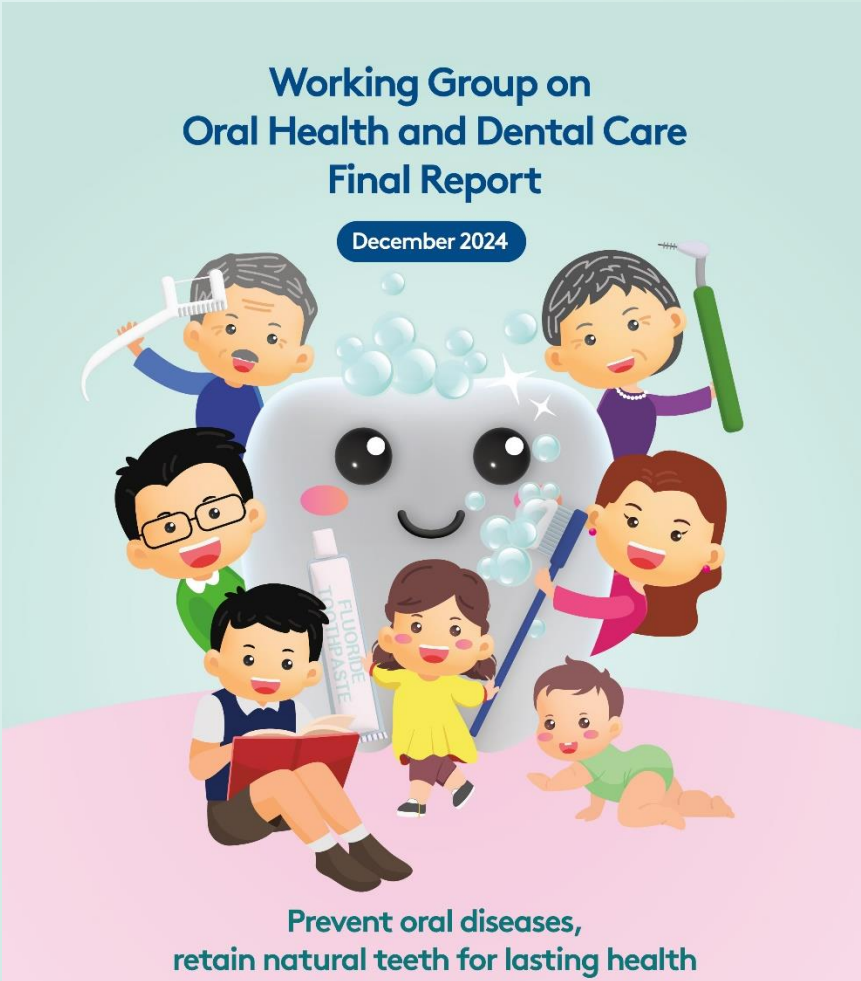
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