Our understanding of the oral microbiome, risk factors for periodontal disease, and the effects of periodontal infection and inflammation on systemic conditions have helped define the new field of periodontal medicine, which has had impact on the management of periodontal disease. Sequencing of the entire oral flora promises to reveal as yet undiscovered pathogens which will help us better understand the cause of periodontal infections.

Identification of periodontal risk factors is now helping the profession to target prevention. Further refinement of risk factor profiles better defining genetic and environmental factors and their attributable risk, should enhance our ability to predict periodontal disease.

Periodontal infection affects systemic diseases such as diabetes mellitus and its complications, as well as heart disease and stroke, low birth weight, and respiratory infections. Understanding these oral-systemic associations may lead to greater interaction and cooperation in managing patients with our medical colleagues, with great benefit to our patients and the overall general health of the population. Greater knowledge of the oral microbiome, periodontal risks, and the systemic effects of periodontal infection will have important implications for dental practice, education, and public health.