

Professor Aubrey Sheiham (1936-2015)



Born in South Africa in 1936, Aubrey Sheiham qualified from the University of Witwatersrand in 1957 before moving to London, where he worked in general dental practice. Within a short period, he commenced his remarkable academic career: Lecturer in Prosthetics; a combined post of Lecturer in Oral Surgery at the University of London and Research Fellow in Dental Epidemiology at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria; and a senior lectureship in Periodontology, prior to moving into his adopted academic home in dental public health.

In 1975, Aubrey was appointed Lecturer in Dental Public Health at what was then The London Hospital Medical College. Within 12 months, he had been promoted to Senior Lecturer, and, in 1982, to Reader and Head of Department. Two years later, he was appointed as Professor of the Joint Department of Community Dental Health and General Dental Practice at UCL and The London Hospital and it was here that he laid the foundations to develop a generation of individuals from all over the world to help improve oral health and its management.

Aubrey's work can be summarised through his continual fight to address oral health inequalities, challenging both the food and drink industries and the dental profession. He had over 400 publications, the majority of which continue to be cited. He was awarded Honorary Doctorates by the University of Athens and University of Western Cape and

received the International Association for Dental Research's (IADR) Distinguished Scientists Awards in Behavioral Sciences and Health and the American Association of Public Health's Special Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Dentistry.

His contribution to primary dental care cannot be understated. Based on data from national adult dental health surveys, he began to pose challenging questions on training, workforce and care modalities. Indeed, when appointed to his Chair, one of the key developments was that of outreach placements for dental students into practice to help the transition from dental school to practice, long before vocational training was even an option.

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