



## My engagement in AVOLA and my devotion to health

With increasing age, my personal interest in stimulating the general and individual interest in health has grown significantly. My professional background is being a dentist and running dental clinical activities. After graduating as a dentist, I began my research training and education for a doctorate, which concerned experimental tissue regeneration. This was followed by specialist training in periodontology (gum disease). A publication from a research group in Helsinki, Finland in 1989 (Mattila et al, BMJ, 1989), which showed the connection between oral health and especially cardiovascular diseases, had a great international impact and also strengthened my interest in the connection between oral health and general health. Over the years, we have since established large patient groups, which enable research and long-term follow-up of the connections between oral health and general health. In particular, we have focused on oral health related to quality of life, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and excess mortality. The research area is constantly expanding both nationally and internationally. New doors are opened with new knowledge and research methods. Presently, the connection between the microflora of the oral cavity and the microflora of the gastrointestinal tract is receiving particular attention.

In dentistry, it is obvious to involve the patient in order to achieve and maintain good oral health. Against this background, it has also become increasingly interesting and urgent to boost awareness of the possibility of influencing one's own health, not only oral health but health in general.

Through my involvement in AVOLA, I hope to contribute to increased interest and commitment to health. It is important to take advantage of the available evidence and convey this knowledge in a way that creates public and individual interest and participation. We want to combine different areas of research to develop a holistic approach to achieving health. Through AVOLA, we also want to contribute to developing new knowledge to preserve and improve health. It feels urgent to create and develop partnerships with academic and clinical institutions, researchers, health professionals, politicians and the public. The overall aim is to prevent and preclude the occurrence of diseases. Contributing within the framework of AVOLA to increased interest and awareness of health and creating and maintaining health feels like a very urgent focus area. It is indeed also a personal challenge.

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