

The BDJ News section accepts items that include general news, latest research and diary events that interest our readers. Press releases or articles may be edited, and should include a colour photograph if possible.

Please direct your correspondence to the News Editor, Arveen Bajaj at the BDJ, 64 Wimpole Street WIG 8YS or by e-mail to bdj@bda-dentistry.org.uk

Revised guidelines on CJD published

Dentists treating patients in the at-risk category for Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) can now treat them in the same manner as other patients, according to the Department of Health (DoH).

It recently published guidance for healthcare and laboratory workers on safe working with transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) such as CJD which replaced the edition issued in March 1998.

The DoH guidelines recognise the low risk of transmission of infection from dental instruments provided optimal standards of infection control and decontamination are maintained. This recommendation is also extended to routine dentistry in confirmed or suspected CJD cases negating the requirement to destroy or quarantine instruments.

The changes include a clearer description of the asymptomatic at-risk patient groups, which differentiate between groups at-risk from familial forms of CJD linked to genetic mutations and patients potentially at-risk from iatrogenic exposure.

The latter category now includes patients who have been contacted as potentially at-risk because of exposure to instruments used on, or receipt of blood, plasma derivatives, organs or tissues donated by a patient who subsequently went on to develop CJD or vCJD.

The guidelines re-inforce the notion that these patients or their relatives may be treated in general dental practice in the same manner as any member of the general public.

According to some practitioners, the logical extension of these guidelines removes the necessity to identify patients by medical history questionnaire in the at-risk category.

The guidelines were prepared in consultation with the Health and Safety Executive and endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) and the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC).

The guidelines are published on-line at www.doh.gov.uk/cjd/tseguidance

Army charity cycle ride



Captain Matt King and eight other riders from the Royal Army Dental Corps, the Royal Artillery and the Royal Logistic Corps cycled from Lands End to John O Groats to raise money for charities Leonard Cheshire, Cancer Research and Esther Benjamin.

New EU directive could leave patients unprotected says GDC

Dentists and other dental professionals from other European countries will be able to work in the United Kingdom without UK registration, under plans provisionally agreed by MEPs last month.

The GDC has expressed concern as it will have no powers to take action to protect patients in this instance. Since July last year, ten of the UK's health and social care regulators have been working together to raise awareness and support for their concerns about a proposed new EU Directive 'Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications', which aims to ease freedom of movement across Europe.

The Alliance of UK Health Regulators

on Europe is convinced that the directive, as it stands, poses a threat to patient safety.

Following a committee vote in the European Parliament on 17 June 2003, 'sectoral' professions - which include dentists and other health professionals - will be included in the scope of the proposed new directive.

This would mean that, under this new law, dentists would be able to work within the EU unregistered for 16 weeks. Whilst the European Parliament Committee has agreed on the scope of the proposal, discussions on the detail of it are expected at the end of summer. This will be followed by a final vote by the European Parliament.

DIARY

September 2003

Young Dentist Conference Scotland

Date: 13.09.03

Venue: Hilton Dunblane Hydro

Contact: BDA Scotland

Tel: 01738 441 040

Fax: 01738 441 042

E-mail: bda.scotland@bda.org

The Faculty of General Dental Practitioners (UK) - Preservative Dentistry: Is less more?

Date: 25.09.03

Venue: Manchester Dental Education Centre, Manchester

Tel: 0161 275 6600

www.den.man.ac.uk

Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Prevention of Tobacco Induced Diseases

Date: 29.09.03-01.10.03

Venue: Winnipeg, Canada

Contact: PTID-Society (Congress 2003)

Fax: +1 (204) 789-3913

E-mail: ptidsociety@aol.com

October 2003

International Conference on Evidence-based Advanced Dentistry

Date: 31.10.03 - 03.11.03

Contact: College of Dental Surgeons Hong Kong

Venue: Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2871 8787

Fax: (852) 2871 8898

E-mail: confdept@hkam.org.hk

Looking into osteoporosis

A team from University Dental Hospital Manchester have been awarded a €1.43 million (almost £1m) three year research grant to look into osteoporosis. The award will be used in a project that investigates the role of dental radiographs in identifying patients who are at risk of having osteoporosis and who might benefit from a Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DXA) scan. DXA is the accepted method of diagnosis of low bone density but many patients at risk will never get the opportunity to have a DXA scan. Professor Keith Horner and Dr Hugh Devlin have set up a project called Osteodent that brings together the complementary skills of other dental scientists in Manchester, Malmo, Amsterdam, Athens and Leuven.

Women in the 45-65 year age group will be recruited to undergo dental radiography, clinical evaluation and DXA bone scans of the hip and spine. Various diagnostic techniques, including computer-aided analysis, will be applied to the dental radiographs so that their efficacy in osteoporosis diagnosis can be compared against the 'gold standard' of the bone scans. Professor Horner claims that there may be something on dental radiographs taken by millions of dentists each year that can identify whether a patient is at risk of osteoporosis. At the end of the research the team aims to be in a position to give clear information on the potential role dentists might have in osteoporosis diagnosis. Anyone interested in further information about the work should contact Dr Susan Pavitt, project co-ordinator on 0161 275 8935 or e-mail susan.pavitt@man.ac.uk.



Dr. Hugh Devlin (above) and Professor Keith Horner (below).



Bristol Dental Alumni alert

This year's Newsletter of the Bristol Dental Alumni Association has recently been published and distributed to its members.

Members who have not yet received a copy or non-members interested in joining should contact the Clinical Dean's office.

The address is: Dental School, Lower Maudlin Street, Bristol, BS1 2LY. Telephone 0117 928 4308, or e-mail theresa.munns@bristol.ac.uk. Membership details can be found on the website at www.dentalschool.bris.ac.uk/postgraduate/alumni.

Into the wilderness for marathon runners

Two BDA Highland Section members completed a 50 mile marathon for charity which took them from one side of Scotland to the other. Chairman David Macintyre (right) and section secretary Colwyn Jones (left) took part in the Highland Cross, an annual charity event which starts in Morvich on the West Coast and ends in Beauly on the east. Competitors travelled cross country through some of the wildest areas of Scotland and the route took them up to an altitude of 1300 feet. The event usually raises around £100,000 for charity each year.



GDC launches complaints service

The GDC has launched a scheme to handle customer complaints about the standard of administration and other services provided by it. The Council claims that the scheme aims to resolve any complaints received simply, quickly and fairly.

The service will focus on any complaints received about the services provided, about the Council and the standard of administration, but it will not handle com-

plaints about decisions based on GDC guidelines or policy.

There are complaints managers for the different areas of the Council's work. These areas are the chief executive's office, education, finance, hearings, professional standards and registration. The GDC complaints manager concerned will reply within five working days, according to Council wide procedures.

A first for dentistry



Dr Martin Tickle

Dr Martin Tickle, senior lecturer and consultant in dental public health in Manchester becomes the first dentist to be presented with a National Public Health Career Scientist Award.

The scheme, which was announced in the public health white paper *Saving Lives, Our Healthier Nation* aims to provide funding to 'exceptional individuals who have demonstrated clear potential to become independent principal researchers and lead research in their field in the future'.

The value of the award is approximately £230,000 over five years and it will enable Dr Tickle to continue to provide an NHS service in Greater Manchester and at the same time manage the expansion of his research portfolio.

The award will fund a research programme which aims to improve the evidence base for public health interventions to prevent tooth decay and to improve services for the dental care of young children.

Promotion at School of Dental Sciences

Dr Mark Thomason has been promoted to Personal Chair of Prosthodontics and Oral Rehabilitation in the School of Dental Sciences, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, with effect from 1 August 2003.

Dr Thomason qualified BDS Newcastle in 1983, and after a series of junior hospital posts was appointed lecturer in Prosthodontics in Newcastle in 1985. He obtained his FDS RCS Ed in 1987 and completed his PhD in 1995.

In 1998, he was promoted to senior lecturer with an honorary consultant contract in restorative dentistry. In addition to academic duties, Dr Thomason is also assistant editor of the *European Journal of Prosthodontics and Restorative Dentistry*, treasurer of the BSSPD and a director of the Prosthodontics Group of the IADR.

His research interests include management of oral problems in organ transplant patients and quality of life issues in relation to implant supported prosthesis. This latter work is being completed in collaboration with the Faculty of Dentistry, McGill University, Montreal, where he has been awarded visiting professor status.



Dr Mark Thomason