

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, The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW or by email to bdj@bda.org

University of London launches residential dentistry course in India

The University of London masters degree programme in dentistry has successfully completed its first ever residential course in Dharwad, India. The nine-day courses, which have been running in the UK since 1999, provide supplementary face-to-face teaching for external students from the Indian subcontinent, Australasia and the Middle East, who together constitute over a quarter of the intake of the world's only fully-online postgraduate distance learning course in clinical dentistry. Until now, students taking the distance learning degree were required to join a residential course held in London during the first three years of the programme. However, from February 2006, the once-a-year courses will be available at the SDM College of Dental Sciences, Dharwad. 'We can now provide intensive hands-on training outside the UK, to supplement the online course material,' said the programme director, Dr Brian Millar. 'By bringing this course to India, we have responded to growing demand and extended access to more dentists who do not have the time or money to travel to the UK.'

The University of London's distance learning course enables dentists to access interactive educational material at a time and location suited to their personal circumstances. Students can learn up-to-date techniques from the close-up videos, high quality photographs and 3D images. There are tutor-supported online seminars; easy access to tutors and administrative staff via email hyperlinks; regular online updates on examination timetables, seminar schedules and upcoming events; a dedicated webpage to help answer students' queries and access to the University's online library.

Party marks launch of *BDJ* vol 200



The 200th volume of the *BDJ* and its landmark series of covers were celebrated in style with a launch party at the Nature Publishing Group headquarters in Crinan Street, London, on Wednesday 18 January. Invited guests included the artists responsible for each of the cover images, along with representatives from the BDA, Nature Publishing Group and the dental industry. Everyone involved had an enjoyable evening, the highlight of which was the cutting of a celebratory cake decorated with the cover image for issue one. Pictured above from left to right, Peter Ashman, Publisher for the *BDJ*, Kim Black-Totham, Publishing Manager and the Journal's Editor-in-Chief, Stephen Hancocks OBE.

Hen's teeth

Gone does not necessarily mean forgotten, especially in biology. A recent finding by researchers at the University of Manchester and the University of Wisconsin, Madison have found new evidence that the ability to form previously lost organs – in this case, teeth – can be maintained millions of years after the last known ancestor possessed them. Despite the fact that birds last possessed teeth about 70-80 million years ago, the researchers found that modern birds retain the ability to make teeth. The scientists showed that the *talpid2* strain of chicken harbours a genetic change that permits tooth formation in both the upper and lower jaw of embryonic birds. These teeth show similar developmental position as mammalian teeth and are associated with similar molecular instructions. When comparing the initial development of the

structures, the researchers realised that the teeth forming in the chicken did not look like mammalian teeth, but resembled those of the alligator, the closest living relative of modern birds. The findings strongly suggest that the birds were initiating developmental programmes similar to those of their reptilian ancestors. In addition, the authors found that the ability to form teeth still resides in normal chickens and can be triggered experimentally by molecular signals. Perhaps it is time to revise the saying: 'as rare as hen's teeth'.



DIARY

March

Bollard MiniPlate Implant & Distraction
Study Day
Professor Hugo De Clerck & Dr Zvi Laster
Venue: Royal Surrey County Hospital
Date: 21 March 2006
Freephone 0800 783 3552
email sales@dbortho.com
Freefax 0800 783 3363.

April

British Society for the Study of Prosthetic
Dentistry Annual Conference
Venue: Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh
Date: 9-11 April 2006
Email: bookings@bsspd.org
www.bsspd.org

May

British Dental Conference and Exhibition
Venue: International Convention Centre,
Birmingham
Date: 18-20 May 2006
www.bda-events.org (£10 discount for
on-line bookings)
Registration office: 0870 166 6625 (UK)
+44 (0) 1252 771 445 (overseas)
Entrance is free

10th European Congress Dentomaxillofacial
radiology
Venue: Provinciehuis
Leuven, Belgium
Date: 31 May -2 June 2006
www.10ecdmfr.be

July

82nd Congress of the European Orthodontic
Society
Venue: Hofburg Congress Center
Vienna, Austria
Date: 4-8 July 2006
Tel. (+43/1) 531 16 - 38
Fax: (+43/1) 531 16 - 61
e-mail: azmedinfo@media.co.at

September

FDI Annual World Dental Congress
Venue: Shenzhen, China
Date: 22-25 September 2006
www.fdiworldental.org
congress@fdiworldental.org

Peter Ward appointed chief executive of the British Dental Association

A former general dental practitioner with extensive administrative and commercial experience has been appointed chief executive of the British Dental Association. Peter Ward joins the BDA at a critical period for the profession and the dental industry, with the introduction of major reforms to NHS dentistry due this April and significant developments within the private market.

After qualifying at the University of Liverpool in 1982, Peter worked in general practice on the Wirral and near Blackpool for 12 years before becoming chief dental adviser to the Dental Practice Board, a statutory regulatory and administrative body. In 1999 he moved into the commercial sector, employed as chief operating officer for Dencare Management and later for Oasis Dental Care which



Peter Ward

owns and operates dental practices across England and Wales. Since 2004, Peter has worked as a management consultant, providing advice and consultancy services to the dental industry. He holds an honours degree in law and an MBA. Peter Ward said: 'This is a pivotal period for dentists and a time when the BDA must be seen to provide support and leadership for the profession. We face significant challenges but the BDA is a fantastic resource and well placed to fulfil this crucial role. I am delighted to be given the opportunity to lead the BDA at what is clearly a critical time for dentistry in the UK.' Peter Ward takes over the role of chief executive from Ian Wylie who left the BDA in December to take up consultancy and academic teaching roles in Hong Kong.

Cross Infection Control e-learning survey

An online survey form is now available for dentists to respond to the CD mailed to practices in England and Wales on Cross Infection Control for the Dental Team. A one-year post evaluation survey has taken place but project leaders are still keen to garner any further feedback. Dentists wishing to respond should log on to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=127221605441>.

No movement from Minister

General Dental Practitioners' Committee Chair Lester Ellman issued a statement after his meeting with Health Minister Rosie Winterton to discuss the BDA's concerns over the new NHS dental contract. Dr Ellman's statement warned that the current uncertainty and confusion were set to continue for both dentists and their patients. The Minister had refused Dr Ellman's request to suspend Units of Dental Activity (UDA) targets and for the provision of information about growth funding for expanding practices before 1 April 2006.

An exchange of letters has taken place since the meeting, with Dr Ellman once again pressing for the contractual requirement to deliver UDAs to be suspended while the system is tested.

Meanwhile, BDA representatives have met with the British Orthodontic Society to discuss the impact on access of the new contractual arrangements for NHS dentistry. Subjects discussed included the experience of orthodontists compared to general dental practitioners, the impact of the changes on those without a working history on which new contracts can be based, and media interest in what the changes will mean for patients.

First woman chair for BDA's Executive Board



Dr Susie Sanderson has been elected as Chair of the British Dental Association's Executive Board. She is the first woman to hold this position. Accepting her new position, Dr Sanderson said, 'It is a great privilege to represent the UK's dentists at this time of radical change for dentistry. Dentists in the UK are looking to the BDA at a time of uncertainty, and we look forward to providing strong leadership to meet the challenges facing us.'

Susie is a general dental practitioner in a mixed family practice in Sheffield and a past Chair of Sheffield Local Dental Committee. She was elected Chair of the Local Dental Committee conference in 2004. She has a long-standing involvement with the BDA at national and local levels.

The Board also welcomed two new members, Judith Husband and Graham Brown.

Periodontitis is associated with pregnancy complications

Results of a new study support the hypothesis that chronic periodontal infection increases the risk of developing preeclampsia in pregnant women. The study, published in February's issue of the *Journal of Periodontology*, suggests that maternal chronic periodontal disease is a risk factor for low birthweight babies among preeclamptic mothers. The researchers found that chronic periodontitis was more prevalent in the preeclamptic group by almost 64% than the non-preeclamptic group at 36%. The researchers also found that chronic periodontal disease and the presence of the microorganisms, such as *Porphyromonas gingivalis*; *Tannerella forsythia* and *Eikenella corrodens* were significantly associated with preeclampsia in pregnant women.

This might mean that periodontal bacterium could find its way into the bloodstream in patients with periodontal disease. '*P. gingivalis* has not only been found in the blood circulation but also in atherosclerotic plaques, which has been linked to periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease,' said Dr Adolfo Contreras from the School of Dentistry, University of Valle, Cali-Columbia. The results of this study provide additional evidence that periodontal infection is linked to preeclampsia; but Kenneth A. Krebs, president of the American Academy of Periodontology, said that further research is needed to support a causal association and its clinical implications.

Diabetes causes gum disease earlier than thought

New research from Columbia University Medical Center has shown that the destruction of the periodontium can start in diabetic children as young as six years old. While the link between diabetes and periodontal disease was previously established, it was believed that regression of gums began much later and increased with age. The study, a collaboration among researchers at the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, Mailman School of Public Health and Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center, is published in the February issue of *Diabetes Care*. 'Our research illustrates that programs to prevent and treat periodontal disease should be considered a standard of care for young patients with diabetes,' said Ira B Lamster, dean of the College of Dental Medicine and principal investigator on the study.

The Columbia study clinically assessed dental cavities and periodontal disease in 182 children and adolescents, ages six to 18 years old, with diabetes, and 160 non-diabetic control subjects. The children with diabetes had significantly more dental plaque and more gingival inflammation than children without diabetes. Early signs of periodontal disease were found in nearly 60 per cent of diabetic children in the six to 11-year-old group, twice the percentage found in the non-diabetic children in that age range - far younger than was previously believed to be affected. In the 12 to 18-year-old study group, nearly 80 per cent of patients with diabetes had early periodontal changes. The study is continuing, and will ultimately include 700 participants.

Dental pulp sheds light on ancient mystery

Scientists have for many years debated the cause of the Plague of Athens. Analysis carried out by Dr Manolis Papagrigorakis and colleagues using DNA collected from teeth from an ancient Greek burial pit points to typhoid fever as the disease responsible for this devastating epidemic. The study, conducted by the Department of Orthodontics, Dental School, University of Athens, appears on the online version of *The International Journal of Infectious Diseases*.

The plague, that began in Ethiopia and passed through Egypt and Libya to Greece in 430-426BC, changed the balance of power between Athens and Sparta, ending the Golden Age of Pericles and Athenian dominance in the ancient world. It is thought that up to one third of the Athenians, including their leader, Pericles, perished in the epidemic. Until now our understanding of this outbreak was based on the account by the fifth

century BC Greek historian Thucydides, who himself was taken ill with the plague but recovered. Despite Thucydides' detailed description, researchers have not managed to agree on the identity of the plague and several diseases, including bubonic plague, smallpox, anthrax and measles have been implicated in the emergence and spread of this epidemic. A mass burial pit unearthed in the Kerameikos ancient cemetery of Athens and dated back to the time of the historical outbreak, provided the required skeletal material for the investigation of ancient microbial DNA. Aided by modern DNA recovery and amplification techniques, Papagrigorakis and his team used dental pulp to identify DNA sequences similar to those of the modern day *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhi, the organism that causes typhoid fever. The results of this study point to typhoid fever as the probable cause of the Plague of Athens.

UCL Eastman Dental Institute reviews a fantastic 2005

Professor Crispian Scully CBE hosted a reception on 1 February 2006 to mark 2005 as having been another exceptional year for the UCL Eastman Dental Institute (EDI). The Institute attracted over £2 million in research grants, with the figure set to rise in 2006 with a number of grants already notified. The year also recorded the Institute's greatest number of PhD degrees awarded, with 14 candidates successfully defending their theses. EDI academics' research was published in top quality journals such as the *Journal of Dental Research*, *Cell*, *Science*, *American Journal of Human Genetics* and *Nature Structural Biology*. Staff published more than 100 original research papers.

Researchers filed another new patent application for the novel treatment of infectious diseases, and a number of products developed out of Eastman inventions are due to be available in 2006. Education was equally impressive. Fifty-four Masters students graduated.

A record number of dentists enrolled on the popular UCL Eastman Diploma in Restorative Dental Practice which will include a certificate and Masters option in future years. More than 2,500 dentists attended Eastman CPD short courses, certificate or diploma programmes. The Institute also introduced eight new university accredited, part-time, certificate/diploma programmes in Special Care Dentistry, Endodontics, Sedation and Pain Management, Implantology and Advanced Implantology and Aesthetic Dentistry.

An outreach clinic has been established to facilitate third year specialist training. Distance learning initiatives took off in 2005 with registered users for the *British Dental Journal* Online CPD approaching 10,000 (one third of UK registered dentists) and the launch of an Online Programme in Restorative Dentistry run by Michael Wise. 2005 had also been a good year for establishing new collaborations. EDI hopes to formalise discussions with Chinese universities and has enjoyed successful existing collaborations with the London Colleges such as KCL and QMW dental schools. EDI currently hosts visiting academics from a number of countries including Italy, Spain and Switzerland.



Professor Scully (centre) and guests

New fellowship

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) has developed a new route through which practitioners can achieve the Fellowship of the Faculty (FFGDP(UK)), the highest award available from the Faculty. Following the successful launch of Stages 1 and 2 of the Career Pathway, the FGDPUK is announcing the launch of the fellowship as Stage 3. This final stage now offers the opportunity to present a portfolio of evidence, including a practice questionnaire, prepared with the help of a personal mentor. The portfolio will enable the dentist to demonstrate knowledge, skills and experience across all aspects of general dental practice, as assessed by fellowship examiners. The Career Pathway, a career development programme devised and supported by the FGDPUK, allows participants to demonstrate a high level of achievement and accumulate credits gained through postgraduate courses, certificates, diplomas and master degrees. It is hoped that dentists will be encouraged to aim for the final fellowship stage to show that their skills and experience are being put into practice for the benefit of patients, staff and colleagues. Information on the Career Pathway and new fellowship is available on the Faculty's website at www.fgdp.org.uk. Alternatively, call 020 7869 6754.

Fitness to practise

The GDC is strengthening its arrangements for dealing with problems of behaviour, practice and poor health in dental professionals, and introducing new procedures to tackle problems of professional competence. The organisation expects to implement the new fitness-to-practise system in July 2006. The GDC is currently consulting on the draft rules that will bring about this new fitness-to-practise system. To access the consultation document, visit the GDC website (www.gdc-uk.org) and click on the 'GDC consultation' tab. For a hard copy of the consultation document, contact Jason Brooks (email: jbrooks@gdc-uk.org, phone 020 7887 3800). The closing date for responses to the consultation is Friday 31 March 2006.



General Dental Council

Young Dentist Conference 2006

Jointly hosted by the *BDJ* and Dental Protection, the Young Dentist Conference 2006 was held at the prestigious premises of the Royal Society on 11 February.

Attracting over 250 delegates, the full day's programme of lectures and trade exhibition included presentations on the likely impact of the NHS reforms and of the new GDS contract. With their careers stretching ahead of them, the young dentists were also keen to learn more about the long term effects of the registration of Dental Care Professionals (DCP) from this summer, as well as the possible situations that may arise in 2009 when the proposed ring-fencing of money for dentistry held by PCTs is removed.



BDJ Editor-in-Chief welcomes delegates to the conference

Bottled mineral water does not contain enough fluoride

According to the American Dental Association, bottled mineral water does not contain sufficient levels of fluoride to prevent cavities, especially in young children. Studies have shown that drinking fluoridated water can reduce caries by as much as 40%. Even though adding fluoride to tap water is a cost-effective public health measure, in the UK, only 10% of the population receives fluoridated tap water, as opposed to more than 50% in the US. Although many children now take bottled water to



school, few bottled waters contain sufficient levels of fluoride to be effective against tooth decay. Under British law, fluoride in natural mineral water must be labelled where it has exceeded 1.5 mg per litre, with a maximum allowed fluoride limit of 5 mg/l. A study published in the *BDJ* in 2003 concluded that bottled water is unlikely to make an important contribution to total fluoride intake in British diets.

2006 BDA/Dentsply Student Clinician Programme

Thirteen students representing each of the UK's dental schools took part in the final round of the annual BDA/Dentsply Student Clinician Programme on 10 February 2006 at the BDA. Jointly organised by the BDA and Dentsply, the winner has the opportunity to attend the American Dental Association's Annual Session with the second prize consisting of an award of £500. This year the first prize was awarded to the representative from Bart's and The London with his presentation titled: 'The role of insulin-like growth factor one and its receptor in oral cancer.' The event was followed by a celebratory dinner, held at the Savoy.

New head office for British Orthodontic Society

The British Orthodontic Society has moved to a new London office, exchanging its offices in Gray's Inn Road for new premises in Bridewell Place in the City of London. The newly refurbished premises are near Blackfriars and City Thameslink stations. The society retains its website address of www.bos.org.uk and the email address of Ann Wright, the administrator continues to be ann.wright@bos.org.uk. However, its other contact details have changed. In future, anyone with any queries should ring the society on 020 7353 8680.



Career opportunities in UK dentistry aired

Feedback from delegates at the careers day event on 10 February 2006 at the Institute of Education in London has been very positive. The event, jointly organised by the BDA Events team and UCL Eastman Dental Institute, saw 305 delegates addressed by speakers including Chair of GPCP Lester Ellman and Acting Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockroft.