

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.

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WATER FLUORIDATION PROPOSALS CAUSE DISPUTE

A public consultation to help decide whether to increase the level of fluoride in the water in parts of Southampton and South West Hampshire has caused considerable controversy in the area.

The scheme would supply approximately 195,000 residents with fluoridated water following concerns from Southampton City Primary Care Trust (PCT) that dental health in the city is amongst the worst in the country. It believes that raising the level of fluoride in the water supply from 0.08 parts per million to one part per million would significantly improve the dental health of local people, particularly children.

Members in the areas being consulted have expressed concern about claims circulated by anti-fluoridation lobbying, including that fluoridation causes cancer. Images of people living in India and China who developed severe fluorosis after being exposed to unacceptably high levels of fluoride (which has no correlation with the level

proposed in the consultation) have also been circulated.

The British Dental Association has welcomed the move towards fluoridation, supported by its Central Committee for Community and Public Health Dentistry and has also encouraged its members to take part in the consultation.

It says that the targeted addition of fluoride into water supplies can reduce oral health inequalities and the incidence of tooth decay. In 2003 the Association, along with other healthcare organisations, supported an amendment to the Water Act 1991, which is now enacted in England.

This compels water companies to fluoridate water supplies where, following consultation with the local community, the strategic health authority requests it – Southampton is the first PCT to consult.

The three-month long consultation, which is being co-ordinated by South Central Strategic Health Author-

ity (SHA), concludes on 19 December and the SHA has organised a series of question time debates on the topic, the last of which is due to take place on 3 December in St Mary's Stadium, Southampton, from 7pm-9pm (no ticket necessary). Speakers for the proposition include England's Chief Dental Officer, while opponents will also be represented.

Keith Percival, the Chairman of Hampshire's local dental committee said, 'Despite the adoption of several oral health promotion interventions in many of the areas being consulted, tooth decay remains a significant problem. It is therefore important that dentists who support fluoridation take this opportunity to reassure people that this initiative is a safe and effective measure to improve the oral health of the whole community.'

For more information, a copy of the consultation document and details of the areas covered by the proposed scheme, visit www.southcentral.nhs.uk/fluoridation.

CREDIT CRUNCH COULD LEAD TO MORE DIY DENTISTRY

A dentist has warned that cash strapped members of the public who have taken to performing their own dental procedures could be doing serious damage to their oral health and are the latest victims of the credit crunch.

Amateur dental procedures on video clip website YouTube include a man putting a temporary filling in a tooth cavity, as well as giving a list of

materials needed for the procedure, while another shows a woman doing tooth whitening by brushing hydrogen peroxide straight onto the teeth. There are also many videos of people pulling out their own teeth at home.

According to Dr Prav Solanki, founder of the website www.cosmet-icdentistryguide.co.uk, people are using their own methods and materials and putting their health at risk by getting amateur advice from YouTube rather than a qualified dentist.

'Our dentists have reported more

cases of people turning up with damaged teeth and gums after trying to do their own teeth whitening,' he says. 'There are long NHS waiting lists and because there is a reduction in availability on the NHS for private dentistry, people can't afford the treatment. It is quite probable this is the reason they are trying to do these treatments at home, but this could cause irreversible damage to their oral health. The credit crunch means people are trying to save money but you have to draw a line, the message is simple: don't try this at home.'

USING PSYCHOLOGY TO HELP PATIENTS WITH DENTAL ANXIETY

Patients with a fear of visiting the dentist are to receive help from a newly launched service. The Health Psychology Service for adults with dental anxiety was launched at King's College, London, earlier this month.

The service offers different ways of helping people who are anxious about visiting the dentist or having dental treatment. Psychologists will work with the patients to identify priorities for changing how they feel about attending the dentist. Many patients want help with feeling less anxious about going into the dental surgery and being able to receive

a dental injection, having dental treatment and taking children to the dentist.

According to Professor Tim Newton, Professor of Psychology as Applied to Dentistry at King's College London Dental Institute, who will be leading the new service, there were two main reasons for its introduction.

He commented, 'We wanted to work with the existing sedation and general anaesthesia service to provide a complementary approach for individuals who were willing to work with psychologists to overcome their fears without using sedation or general anaesthetic.' He explained

that a survey conducted of patients in the Department of Sedation and Special Care Dentistry showed that some would like to try a psychological approach.

For those with dental anxiety, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) will be used to help overcome their fear and enable them to attend surgery. In CBT, the psychologist helps patients to identify problems and search for solutions. It helps patients to link thinking patterns, beliefs, emotions and behaviour. Patients will be given self-help assignments, for example practising relaxation skills or learning about dental equipment.

'There is a lot of research evidence that the principles of CBT are effective in reducing dental fear, as summarised in the systematic review *Dental fear in adults: a meta-analysis of behavioural interventions* [Community Dent Oral Epidemiol 2004; 32: 250-264]. We are working with Peter Milgrom from the University of Washington in Seattle, and Emeritus Professor Isaac Marks from the King's College London Institute of Psychiatry to develop computerised CBT. The traditional therapist-led CBT will be a control group for demonstrating the effectiveness of the new computerised version,' Professor Newton said.

The preliminary findings of the successful use of the technique in patients with fear of injections were recently presented at the annual conference of the Society for the Advancement of Anaesthesia in Dentistry. Dr Newton anticipates that in the first year the service will be able to see around 60 patients, with a view to expanding the service once its efficacy has been demonstrated.



Professor Tim Newton, Head of the King's College London Dental Institute Health Psychology Service, with Dr Serbjit Kaur, Head of Quality and Standards at the Department of Health, who opened the service

GDC SEEKS VIEWS ON REVALIDATION PROPOSALS

The General Dental Council (GDC) is asking registrants to contribute their views on its proposals for the revalidation of dentists. Under the revalidation proposals, dentists will need to provide evidence in four key areas – professionalism, clinical, management and leadership, and communication. Evidence might include clinical audit, significant event analysis, patient surveys, and personal and practice development plans.

The GDC's President Hew Mathewson said that dentists could visit the website, read the proposals and let the Council know their views. 'The first cycle of revalidation for dentists is not expected to start until 2011. By that time we should have thoroughly tested the system that is finally introduced,' he said.

A series of pilots are due to begin throughout the UK in early 2009 which

are aimed to help the Council assess how long it will take dentists to gather evidence required to revalidate, how easily it can be provided and how useful it is in the revalidation process. About 100 dentists will participate in each pilot, and the pilots are likely to be run in Scotland and England with both NHS and independent dentists.

Once revalidation is up and running for dentists, the GDC will look at introducing a system for other groups of dental professionals on its registers.

UK PIONEERS SCOOP HIGHEST FDI AWARDS



Dr Burton Conrod presents Dr John Hunt (L) with the FDI List of Honour certificate



Dr Burton Conrod presents Dame Margaret Seward with the FDI List of Honour certificate

Dame Margaret Seward and Dr John M. G. Hunt were officially inaugurated to the FDI List of Honour at the recent Annual World Dental Congress in Stockholm. The FDI List of Honour is the highest award of the organisation and is limited to 30 people worldwide.

Dame Margaret Seward has served as the editor of the FDI's *International Dental Journal*, as well as the editor of the *British Dental Journal* and Chairman of the FDI Communications Committee. In addition to Dame Margaret's work with the FDI, she also held the prestigious offices of Chief Dental Officer for England, President of both the General Dental Council and the British Dental Association and Vice-Dean for the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Dr Hunt, who recently served as Interim Executive Director of the FDI, is a past-Speaker of the FDI General Assembly. For his work for the dental profession, Dr Hunt was awarded an OBE in 2001. He is a Fellow of the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) and has also been awarded Honorary Membership of the American

Dental Association and the BDA.

The awards were presented by FDI President, Dr Burton Conrod, who said 'Dame Margaret and Dr Hunt are most worthy recipients of the FDI's highest honour and their careers are inspirational examples of what we should all strive to accomplish. They have dedicated their lives to raising awareness of the importance of oral health, promoting our profession and acting as catalysts for positive changes in the oral health environment. By recognising their contributions, the FDI challenges others to follow in their footsteps.'

More than 15,000 participants, representing 124 countries, attended the congress where over 80 scientific sessions were presented by around 180 speakers. The theme of this year's scientific programme was Pioneering Prevention and there were thirteen special interest forums, open to all congress participants.

Topics covered included dentistry and tobacco, millennium development goals, dental ethics and innovative partnerships to expand oral health.

NEW PROJECT TO TRAIN LOCAL DENTISTS UP AND RUNNING

A new £2.2 million dental school has opened in East Lancashire. The Oak House Dental Centre, adjacent to the Accrington Pals Health Centre in Paradise Street, Accrington, was opened by Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft last month and aims to train 'home-grown' dentists for the future, with the idea that where students train they often end up staying in the area as practitioners.

It has four purpose-built NHS dental

surgeries which are up and running in place of the old surgeries at Accrington Victoria Hospital site, and which act as a new base for the local NHS out-of-hours emergency dental service.

The partnership has set up a 'hub and spoke' dental school, with the University site in Preston acting as the main hub, while East Lancashire's new centre will be one of the 'spokes' placed in the heart of the local community.

DIARY

NOVEMBER

BDA Seminar series: Advanced business and communication skills for dental practices

Date: 28 November 2008
Venue: Café Royal, London
Tel: 020 7563 4590
Email: events@bda.org

DECEMBER

The British Society of Dental Hygiene & Therapy Medical Emergency Evening

Date: 2 December 2008
Venue: Glenfield Hospital, Leicester
www.bsdt.org.uk/diary.html

British Society of Gerodontology and BDA CDS Group Winter Meeting

Date: 4 December 2008-11-07
Venue: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
Email: Vicki.Jones3@gwent.wales.nhs.uk

An Introduction to Cerec

Date: 4 December 2008 (Cardiff)
9 December 2008 (Glasgow)
Tel: 029 2044 2818.

9th Annual Meeting of the Global Forum on Bioethics in Research

Date: 3-5 December 2008
Venue: Auckland, New Zealand
http://gfbr9.hrc.govt.nz/index.php/home

British Society for Disability and Oral Health Winter Meeting

Date: 5 December 08
Venue: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
Tel: 01865 375113
Email: pwattsmith@yahoo.co.uk

NHS Contract 2009

Date: 6 December 2008
Venue: Marriott, Marble Arch, London
www.dentalevents.co.uk

RCPSG GDC Core Competencies Symposium

Date: 10-12 December 2008
Venue: Glasgow
www.rcpsg.ac.uk

FGDP(UK) Scotland Annual Study Day

Date: 12 December 2008
Venue: Glasgow Royal Concert Hall
www.fgdp-scotland.org

ACT AGAINST MOUTH CANCER

This year's Mouth Cancer Action Week carried the message 'Action speaks louder than words'. The event, which took place this week, took a new, positive stance against the disease according to campaign organisers the British Dental Health Foundation.

The new Action Week replaces the former Mouth Cancer Awareness Week name, and the Foundation's Blue Ribbon Badge campaign will continue to promote awareness by sending badges and collection boxes to dental practices, doctor's surgeries, pharmacies and health centres across the country. Badges will then be sold to the public, raising funds and promoting the campaign.

A key message is retained from previous campaigns – 'If in doubt, get checked out'. According to the Foundation, easily recognisable symptoms and regular check-ups can boost survival rates to 90% with early detection. Survival rates once mouth cancer has spread are as low as 50%.

Foundation chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said that action could be as simple as visiting the dentist regularly, or making lifestyle choices such as



quitting smoking or drinking in moderation. 'Early detection of mouth cancer can save lives, so people should look out for non-healing ulcers, red and white patches in the mouth, or unusual changes in the mouth. Common causes are smoking, chewing tobacco, drinking to excess and poor diets and links have now been found between oral sex and mouth cancer.' For more information visit the Foundations web page www.mouthcancer.org.

NEW PRESIDENT-ELECT FOR EUROPEAN IMPLANT ASSOCIATION

Paul Stone has been endorsed as the new President-Elect for the European Association for Osseointegration (EAO) at its recent General Assembly in Warsaw. He will hold this office for two years, taking over as President for two years at the close of the EAO Annual Congress being held at the SECC in Glasgow (7-9 October 2010), for which he is also the Scientific Chairman.

Dr Stone has been involved with implant dentistry for 20 years and is a Specialist in Oral Surgery. He is a part-time Consultant and Honorary Senior Lecturer at Edinburgh Dental Institute and a member of staff at both Dundee Dental School and the Tayside Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery service in Dundee and Perth. He is also a Director of



the Blackhills Specialist Dental Referral Clinic in Perthshire.

He has been the Secretary General of the Board of Directors of the EAO for the past two years and served as an Ordinary Member of the Board for the preceding year. He was also past President of the Association of Dental Implantology UK (ADI).