

Dental news

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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PROBE INTO LACK OF ACCESS TO NHS DENTISTRY LAUNCHED

The Health Secretary Alan Johnson has announced an independent review of dentistry to investigate why so many are without access to an NHS dentist. The review team will look at why there are variations in access and whether the decline in complex treatments reflects the clinical needs of patients.

The team will recommend how funding for dentistry should be allocated to local primary care trusts according to the size and particular needs of the local population. More than 1.2 million fewer people in England are able to access an NHS dentist now than was the case before the reforms were implemented, according to Government figures.

The review will also look at how the Government can best address the issues raised in the Health Select Committee's

2008 report on dentistry, including the suggestion that more treatment bands are introduced.

Welcoming the move, the BDA's Executive Board Chair Susie Sanderson said, 'The BDA is pleased to see the long overdue announcement of a review of NHS dentistry in England. The announcement recognises the significant problems patients and dentists face and places the Department of Health on a path to addressing those problems.'

The independent review team will be chaired by Professor Jimmy Steele, Chair in Oral Health Services Research at the School of Dental Sciences in Newcastle and will include two NHS dentists and an NHS manager. The results of the study, 'A review of NHS dentistry in England' will be published next spring.



NHS PATIENTS BEING OVERCHARGED

New figures from the Conservative Party show that patients are being overcharged for NHS dental work by up to £109 million a year.

The Conservatives surveyed every PCT in England to find out how many patients were having to go back to their dentist within a three-month period for treatment and were paying more than once. They claim that the data shows that dentists were splitting the course of treatments in order to charge twice.

Patients have to pay once for each course of treatment and, if they need further work within two months of completing that course, they do not have to pay anything extra. The Conservative party say that dentists are

recalling patients after the two month period in order to earn more money.

Guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) says no patient should be called back to their dentist for a check-up within three months. The Conservatives claim that if the advice from NICE had been followed, then up to 6.5 million slots could have been freed up for people who do not have an NHS dentist, and patients would also have saved up to £109 million in incorrect dental charges.

Shadow health secretary Andrew Lansley attacked Labour for taking too long to accept its dental contract was flawed, commenting, 'The Government

urgently needs to admit that the dental contract has been a monumental failure, get a grip and put an end to these practices immediately.'

However, The British Dental Health Foundation warned that patients could be put off dental check-ups and urged politicians to remember their duty. Foundation Chief Executive Dr Nigel Carter said, 'Negative messages run the risk of undermining Britain's oral health. For nearly 40 years we have campaigned with the key message advising people to visit their dentist regularly – as often as they recommend. This is so important to dental health, its systemic links to overall health issues such as diabetes, and in checking for mouth cancer, which kills one person every five hours in the UK.'

HIGH-FLYING DENTISTRY

A paper featured in this issue of the *BDJ* looks at the unusual issue of flight-related oral conditions and treatment. *Aviation dentistry: current concepts and practice* by Dr Yehuda Zadik aims to introduce the concepts of aviation (aerospace) medicine and dentistry to a wider audience. Data looks at head and facial barotraumas (barotrauma-related headache, external otitic barotrauma, barosinusitis and barotitis-media), dental barotrauma (barometric pressure-related tooth injury), barodontalgia



(barometric pressure-related oro-dental pain), and dental care for aircrews.

Dr Zadik says the reason he decided to look at the subject matter in depth was because of his experiences working in the Israeli Air Force (IAF). 'When I served in the IAF as head of the dental clinic of Ramon Airbase and later of Palmachim Airbase, I had several occasions on which I did not find answers for clinical dilemmas regarding dental treatments of aircrews in the literature or in relevant textbooks and so I decided to study this field.

'I participated in the IAF advanced training in aviation medicine, published several works on barodontalgia, dental barotraumas and bruxism in aircrew members, and together with Dr Shmuel Einy wrote the chapter on aviation dentistry in the IAF Aviation Medicine Textbook.'

Dr Zadik added that flight-related dental conditions were a major concern during the 1940s. In World War II, numerous dental studies were conducted in altitude-chamber simulations and

during in-flight observations and there was even a speciality programme in aviation dentistry offered in the US.

He continues, 'Since then, the prevalence of flight-related oral manifestations has declined, but not disappeared, due to partial pressurisation of aeroplanes' cabins as well as significant improvement in dental techniques and the general population's oral health, leading to decline in the scientific and clinical interest in this field. However, a renewed interest has occurred in the last two decades as studies and reports mainly from the UK, USA, Canada, Spain, Germany, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel have been published. Moreover, earlier this year Dr Leon Dychter, Dr Estrella Forster and other dental practitioners founded the International Association of Aerospace Dentistry (IAAD). The new Association will have, for the first time, a scientific panel, entitled Dentistry in Aviation, during the next Aerospace Medical Association Annual Meeting which will take place in Los Angeles (May 3-7, 2009).'

HONOUR AWARDED

Keith Horner, Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Imaging at Manchester's School of Dentistry, has been honoured with a Doctorate of Odontology *honoris causa* by the University of Malmö.

Professor Horner received his doctorate at a graduation ceremony held in Malmö Konserthuset to mark the end of his period as Visiting Professor within

the university's Faculty of Odontology.

The honour was granted in recognition of the long-standing research collaborations between Professor Horner and the staff of the Oral Radiology Department at Malmö. This research included two European Commission Framework projects and numerous scientific publications. Much of the work focused on the use of dental radiographs in assessment of osteoporosis risk.

Professor Horner is currently leading a European Commission 7th Euratom Framework project on the use of cone beam computed tomography in dentistry.

Professor Lars Mattson, Dean of the Faculty of Odontology at the University of Malmö, highlighted these achievements in his citation before giving Professor Horner a hat, ring and scroll as symbols of the doctoral degree.

DENTAL PRACTICE UNIT UNVEILED

The newly refurbished dental practice unit at the University of Sheffield was opened recently by the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Councillor Arthur Dunworth. Funding for the unit was obtained by a grant from the HEFC with additional help coming from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust.

As part of the refurbishment, the number of dental surgeries in the unit has been increased to ten, from the five it

had originally. The photograph shows the Dean of the School of Clinical Dentistry, Professor Paul Speight, after the unveiling of the plaque by the Lord Mayor.

The £3.5 million Dental School building opened in 1992 and houses a 40-unit dental technology laboratory and a 13 unit clinical skill laboratory. A newly refurbished 20 place dental technology laboratory is situated in an adjacent building.



DIARY

JANUARY

BDA Seminar series: Developing your practice: successful complaint management techniques

Date: 30 January 2009

Venue: London

www.bda.org

events@bda.org

MJDF Portfolio of Evidence Workshop (Glasgow)

Date: 29 January 2009

Venue: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow

www.fgdp.org.uk

esmith@rcseng.ac.uk

BioHorizons Surgical & Restorative Implant Training Course

Date: January to October, once a month

Venue: Various

infouk@biohorizons.com

www.biohorizons.com

FEBRUARY

Enfield and District Section – New contract – is this the end

Date: 10 February 2009

Venue: Chase Postgrad Cent, Enfield

www.bda.org

events@bda.org

Human Factors and Safety Masterclass

Date: 12-13 February 2009

Venue: MDDUS, London

www.terema.co.uk

BDA Seminar series: Preparing for retirement

Date: 13 February 2009

Venue: Westerwood Hotel, Glasgow

www.bda.org

events@bda.org

BDA Seminar series: Achieving high standards in infection control

Date: 27 February 2009

Venue: London

www.bda.org

events@bda.org

MARCH

The Dentistry Show

Date: 13-14 March 2009

The NEC Birmingham

www.thedentistryshow.co.uk

GUIDANCE FOR DENTISTS WHO WANT TO WORK IN EUROPE

The Council of European Dentists (CED) has published a comprehensive guide on the training and work requirements for dentists and other dental professionals who want to practise in other EU member states.

The latest edition of the *EU manual of dental practice* describes the legal and ethical regulations, dental training requirements, oral health systems and the organisation of dental practice in 32 European (EU and EEA) countries, including Croatia, which is due to join the EU next year.

The practising arrangements, regulatory frameworks and systems within which dentists work in the respective countries are compared. There is also country specific information on the dental specialities that are recognised, along with details of where such training is available and its duration.

The guide also contains information on other dental care professionals, with a list of those which are recognised, their training, the procedures they are allowed to carry out, and the rules within which they can legally practise.

FUNDING ANNOUNCED FOR ORTHODONTIC SPECIALITY

The British Orthodontic Society Foundation (BOSF) has announced funding for two major pieces of research. A sum of £97,296 was awarded for 'A longitudinal study of orthognathic patients' self-perception, motivation and expectations in relation to outcomes' and a further £32,534 to a project examining 'The possible role of chewing gum in orthodontic pain relief'.

In 2009 up to £85,000 is available from the BOSF to support research and educational projects and personal

research fellowships. Applications for support from the British Orthodontic Society Foundation are invited and in line with its aims, the Society is encouraging applicants to consider projects that will benefit the orthodontic speciality. Collaborative research between groups and organisations are especially encouraged.

Applications must be received electronically by noon on the 16 January 2009. The awards guidelines and an application form are available on www.bos.org.uk.

NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED

The GDC has appointed a new group of members to its independent Appointments Committee who will take office this month. The Appointments Committee's role is to oversee the training and performance of the GDC's independent Fitness to Practise Panel, made up of 76 members, and recruit new members as required.

In the future it will also be responsible for recommending members for the Council's Investigating Committee, which considers allegations of impaired

fitness to practise and decides whether a case should be referred to one of the Practice Committees.

The new membership of the Appointments Committee are Sally Irvine (Chair), Nicola Billot (registrant), Jeanne Goulding (lay), John Hunt (registrant), Ray McAndrew (registrant), Marcia Roberts (lay), James Walker (lay).

New Chair Sally Irvine is currently a member of Council and will be resigning before she takes up her appointment. She is currently an independent of the Solicitors Regulatory Authority.

PAST BDA BRANCH PRESIDENT DIES

James E. McAuley, a retired dental surgeon and past BDA Branch President,

has died aged 97. A full obituary will follow in a later issue of the *BDJ*.