

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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BDA ISSUES APOLOGY FOR APPEARANCE ON ITV'S *TONIGHT* PROGRAMME

British Dental Association Chief Executive Peter Ward has issued an apology for the interview clips of him that were broadcast on ITV's *Tonight* programme on the evening of 16 February. The programme, called 'What's in your mouth?', looked at the issue of the safety of mercury amalgam fillings.

In an open apology to all dentists posted to his blog on the BDA website, Mr Ward has written:

'Many of you will have watched the *Tonight* programme 'What's in your mouth?'. For those who did (and indeed those who didn't) I must offer my full and unmitigated apologies for my performance. The scenes that were

broadcast represent a small fraction of the interview that did not follow the sequence I expected and caught me by surprise. That is, however, no excuse for the spoiling tactics I adopted on the spur of the moment. To my colleagues, I would like to say that I am truly sorry.'

Explaining the context from which the clips were taken, Mr Ward said: "For the sake of information, you may wish to know that the interview with me was for approximately one hour, during which time I answered many questions on the inertness of amalgam, on the extensive studies that have failed to reveal any connection with harm, the longevity of

restorations and the fact that the dental profession has no vested interest in defending the material as they themselves come into contact with it more significantly than their patients. I also pointed out that dentists and their families are patients too and that they still use amalgams themselves.'

Following the broadcast the BDA has also taken steps to address the issues raised by the programme, issuing a statement to calm fears about amalgam safety and providing dentists with easily accessible online information resources via its website that can be used in conversations with patients. They are accessible at: www.bda.org

2009 DENTSPLY/BDA STUDENT CLINICIAN PROGRAMME

The 32nd Dentsply/BDA student clinician programme awards took place on 6 February 2009 with 13 teaching schools putting forward an entrant. Each student presented a piece of original research to the three adjudicators: Professor Nairn Wilson, Head of School and Dean of Kings College London Dental Institute and member of the *BDJ* Advisory Board; Dr John Drummond, Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant of Dundee Dental School and President-Elect BDA; and Professor Robbie McConnell, from the Department of Restorative Dentistry College of Medicine, Cork University Dental School.

The winners were announced during a black tie gala dinner at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Knightsbridge hosted by Dr Linda Niessen, Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer of Dentsply International, and organised by the Dentsply

UK Professional Support Team of Kate Caple and Simon Abbey.

The first prize of an all expenses paid trip to the American Dental Association (ADA) meeting in Honolulu in October went to Megan Cross of the University of Birmingham Dental School for her entry 'DNase activity within dental plaque and gingival crevicular fluid during a 21 day experimental model of gingivitis'. Megan will also become a member of SCADA - the Student Clinician Program of the ADA.

The Second prize of £500 went to Raheel Malik of Kings College London Dental Institute for his entry 'The role of the chemokine receptor 'CXCR4' in oral squamous cell carcinoma tumour cell biology'. The adjudicators' prize for professionalism throughout the presentation went to Gemma Walker of the

University of Sheffield, School of Clinical Dentistry for her entry 'CT imaging and dental age estimation'.

The innovative Awards programme supports international undergraduate research and emphasises the continuous bond that exists between the profession and the dental industry. The programme focuses on original research providing an insight into all aspects of dentistry.

Past entries of the programme have commented on how appreciative they were to have the opportunity to be involved with research during their undergraduate studies. They felt this experience provided them with an invaluable eye-opener to wider career opportunities and truly emphasised the relevance of research to dental practice.

For information on the 2010 Dentsply/BDA Student Clinician Programme, please contact DENTSPLY on +44-(0)800-072-3313. www.dentsply.co.uk

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION LAUNCHED

An independent commission has been established to examine the commissioning of oral healthcare in England and Wales. It will concentrate on four major areas of work including innovative and flexible commissioning, integration of primary care services, developing oral health in strategic health authority and primary care trust strategies and incorporating patient experience, including access, into commissioning.

The group will be chaired by Professor Chris Drinkwater, President of the NHS Alliance, and is expected to publish its final report in the summer of 2010. Launching the group, Professor Drinkwater said, 'The 2006 reforms of health service dentistry and the onus placed on primary care trusts to improve access to NHS care in the 2008/09 Operating Framework, alongside the challenges posed by the recommendations of the NHS Next Stage Review, mean that local commissioning is the big issue facing health service dentistry.'



The commission has been established as part of a major BDA project exploring excellence in local commissioning. It will include an audit of commissioning currently being undertaken by primary care trusts, an analysis of commissioning models and the production of a contracting toolkit.

DENTAL SCHOOL HEAD APPOINTED

Professor James Newton has been appointed Head of the University of Aberdeen Dental School. He joins Aberdeen from the University of Dundee Dental Hospital and School where he was Sub-Dean for Teaching and Senior Clinical Lecturer and Honorary Consultant in Restorative Dentistry. He has previously been Acting Lead of the new dental school.



Professor Newton believes that with the demographic changes in the Scottish population, dental care will become more challenging and the investment in the University of Aberdeen Dental School will contribute significantly to meeting these challenges now and in the future.

His previous appointments include Senior Clinical Lecturer in Prosthetic Dentistry, Senior Clinical Lecturer in Integrated Restorative Care and Head of the Integrated Oral Care Clinic at the Dundee Dental School. He has been actively involved with the international journal *Gerodontology* since 1992, becoming Editor-in-Chief in 2003, and has published extensively in the areas of gerodontology, oral physiology and dental education.

The dental school's initial cohort of 15 students is half way through the first of their four years of study. Subsequent intakes will see 20 students each year join the graduate entry level course.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS ORAL HEALTH CHECK NEED

A survey has revealed that less than half of hospital nursing staff carry out routine oral health checks. The survey, published in the online journal *BMC Oral Health*, looked at oral cancer awareness amongst hospital nursing staff and found that less than half of those surveyed carried out routine oral health checks.

The survey found that while over 80% of nurses thought oral health checks were important, only 49% performed this task regularly. Although approximately 70% of staff identified smoking as a risk factor for oral cancer, less than 30% identified alcohol as one.

Awareness of the clinical signs of oral cancer was low, with 21% identifying white patches, 15% identifying ulceration and only 2% identifying red patches, despite their malignant potential. It also found that nurses within three years of qualification were significantly better at recognising risk factors for oral cancer than their colleagues, identifying a need for continuing postgraduate education on oral health and oral cancer. The study highlighted the need for improved education of nurses on oral cancer in order to make the oral health check on admission viable for oral cancer screening.

Dental charity the British Dental Health Foundation says health checks upon hospital admission must become routine practice to help eradicate mouth cancer, as nurses had a unique opportunity in their role looking after oral health of their patients. Chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said that hospital admission provides the perfect opportunity for oral cancer screening. 'Just as we encourage dentists to ensure they carry out screenings and discuss the issues with patients, we hope to see health professionals across the industry take action and improve awareness.'

The full article (*BMC Oral Health* 2009; 9: 4) can be read online at www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6831/9/4.

RETIRED DENTIST INVENTS NEW STYLE TOOTHBRUSH

A retired dentist has invented a toothbrush that he says will foster cleaner teeth and healthier gums because it changes how the user holds the toothbrush. Tony Hodgkison, who ran his own dental practice in Witney, Oxfordshire for 30 years, created a design that makes the user hold the brush in such a way that it leads to more effective circular brushing of the teeth.

The 63 year old has taken his idea to experts at Coventry University's Health Design and Technology Institute (HDTI), which is now developing the product ahead of clinical trials.

The toothbrush combines a disposable brush-head with a handle that is similar to that found on a screwdriver, lending itself to circular brushing. According to its inventor, toothbrush design has not moved on much in 70 years and when many people use a conventional brush they tend to scrub, which is not the most effective method and can lead to gum recession.

Mr Hodgkison said, 'Regular toothbrushes are clumsy things and it has been on my mind for some time to do something about this – I just needed

support to develop my idea. Dentists advise us to use a circular motion when cleaning our teeth to ensure the whole area of each tooth is reached – but in my experience that is not always easy to do with many toothbrushes on the market. Changing your grip while cleaning means you can more accurately target the teeth for brushing.'

Mr Hodgkison hopes to have his product on the market within the next five years.



The toothbrush combines a disposable brush-head with a handle that is similar to that found on a screwdriver

2009 BRITISH DENTAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Booking for the 2009 British Dental Conference and Exhibition is now open. With the theme of 'Dentistry is transforming', the event, which takes place in Glasgow from 4-6 June, will bring together an extensive line-up of almost 100 conference speakers to explore the changing face of the profession today. In tandem, an expanded range of exhibitors will showcase the changes in dental technology as the profession looks ahead to the challenges of the future.

The keynote address will be delivered by Charan Gill MBE, the award-winning entrepreneur featured on Channel 4's 'The Secret Millionaire', while author and Paralympic gold-medallist Marc Woods will also be a guest speaker.

For further information or to register for the 2009 British Dental Conference and Exhibition, visit www.bda.org/conference or telephone 0870 166 6625. Any other queries about the event can be emailed to events@bda.org or by phone at 0207 563 4590.

NEW CHAIR ELECTED

John Milne, a dental practitioner based near Wakefield in West Yorkshire, has been elected as the new Chair of the BDA's General Dental Practice Committee (GDPC). He is a partner in a



mainly NHS practice and holds a Clinical Assistant post in Orthodontics at Pinderfields Hospital, Wakefield.

Dr Milne, the representative for the GDPC's Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield constituency, is a long-serving member of the committee, having been a member since its inception in 2003 and a member of its predecessor, the GDSC, for three years. He has also served the profession extensively at local level and is currently secretary of Wakefield Local Dental Committee.

A member of the Department of Health's Key Stakeholder Group, Dr Milne also featured in Lord Darzi's Next Stage Review Group. He is also Dental Advisor to Wakefield District Primary Care Trust.

Dr Milne will be supported by the two newly-elected Vice Chairs of the GDPC: Cornwall-based dentist Peter Hodgkinson and West London practitioner Henrik Overgaard-Nielsen.

HIGHLIGHTING CONDUCT

There has been a year on year increase in the number of professional conduct cases heard by the GDC, according to a new paper.

A five year review of cases appearing before the General Dental Council's Professional Conduct Committee (*BDJ* 2009; 206: 217-223) showed an increase from 23 cases in 2003 to 65 cases in 2007 with the Council handing down 56 erasures and 37 suspensions.

One of the authors, Dr Singh said, 'By condensing, highlighting and publishing some of the relevant data, members of the dental team will become more aware of the serious view taken by the GDC regarding a variety of misdemeanours carried out by registered professionals.'

DIARY

FEBRUARY

BioHorizons Surgical & Restorative Implant Training Course

Date: January to October, once a month

Venue: Various

info@biohorizons.com

www.biohorizons.com

MARCH

Australian Dental Congress and Exhibition

Date: 12-15 March 2009

Venue: Perth Convention Exhibition Centre, Perth, Australia

www.ada2009.com

The Dentistry Show

Date: 13-14 March 2009

Venue: NEC Birmingham

www.thedentistryshow.co.uk

APRIL

Seventh Annual Caribbean Dental Convention

Date: April 16- 19 2009

Venue: The Grand Barbados Beach Resort

www.caribbeandentalprogram.com

8th Congress of the International Society of Breath Odor Research

Date: 26-28 April 2009

Venue: Dortmund, Germany

http://www.isbor.net/

MAY

ADI Biennial Implant Team Congress

Venue: ICC Birmingham

Date: 7-9 May 2009

www.adi.org.uk

Materials in Dentistry

Date: 8 May 2009

Venue: Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, London

Email: dawn.bonfield@iom3.org

www.iom3.org/events/dentistry

Clinical Innovations Conference and Annenberg Lecture

Date: 15-16 May 2009

Venue: Royal College of Physicians, London

Tel: 020 7400 8989

Email: info@smile-on.com

www.smile-on.com

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

The Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England has launched two new dental surgery research competitions for full-time clinical research fellowships and for grants to support research materials and equipment.

The first of the new Faculty Research Fellowships have been awarded to Mr Andrew Hobkirk, Specialist Registrar in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in Liverpool, to support his research on

epigenetic biomarkers of head and neck cancer, and to Mr Phillip Tomson, Lecturer in Restorative Dentistry at the University of Birmingham, to support his research on the effects of mineral trioxide aggregate on the dental pulp.

The new Faculty grant scheme has begun with awards going to clinical dental researchers who are studying a diverse range of subjects which include epithelial cell behaviour, longevity of resin retained bridges, radicular biofilms and tooth wear.



The first two Research Fellows with Professor Jonathan Shepherd CBE, Senior Vice Dean and Chairman of the Research Committee, Faculty of Dental Surgery, Royal College of Surgeons of England

TOOTH PULLING INCIDENCES RIFE

A survey conducted by consumer magazine Which? has found that 26% of respondents have tried to pull a tooth using pliers and 12% have tried doing this using a piece of string tied to a door handle. Three in ten DIY dentists have tried to whiten their teeth with household cleaning products.

Other DIY procedures people admitted to include using household glue to stick down a filling or crown, popping an ulcer with a pin, trying to mend or alter dentures and trying to stick down a loose filling with chewing gum.

The consumer magazine says that the online survey of 2,631 adults aged 16+ in England forms part of a campaign

they are launching to find out what the real problems are with dentistry today.

However, England's chief dental officer Barry Cockcroft said, 'These findings come from an online multiple choice survey that has no statistical credibility. It is ludicrous to suggest that three million people are doing DIY dentistry.'

Susie Sanderson, Chair of the BDA's Executive Board, said that it was not advisable to resort to do-it-yourself care and urged anyone considering this path to think again. She warned, 'It is all too easy to make the problem worse, rather than solve it. If you are having trouble accessing NHS dental care then contact your local primary care trust.'