

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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STEELE REVIEW OUTLINES UPCOMING CHALLENGES

NHS dentistry could lead the world in providing an oral health service, according to Professor Jimmy Steele, Chair of the recent independent dentistry review and Head of the School of Dental Sciences, Newcastle University.

Speaking at a Westminster Health Forum keynote seminar, Professor Steele outlined the challenges faced by the dental profession in modernising an entrenched dental system in the face of a rapidly changing patient base.

He said that during the review process, the review team came across a service that over 60 years had forgotten what it was about, with mixed expectations and a lack of clarity over the role of NHS dentistry. He cited problems such as too much room for interpretation and inconsistency in delivery of service, with access and patient expectation being two significant areas of focus.

One of the major recommendations in the review was that NHS dental care should be provided according to a pathway that is built around the key priorities of preventing disease and continuing

care and the recognition of rights and responsibilities within the system.

Professor Steele said, 'I am worried that the simple principles and values get forgotten in the need to thrash out the detail. This is a call to all those who will be dealing with thrashing out that detail to try and make sure that the principles and values are not forgotten and the process abandoned. I am also worried about trying to change the system without the information infrastructure. If we do not have the information to learn what is actually happening in response, we will not be any the wiser and we will not get the improvement that we could. What I do hope for is that we recognise and start to fulfill the potential of the NHS as a service to improve the oral health of our population.'

Dr Barry Cockcroft, Chief Dental Officer for England, echoed Professor Steele's comments about early prevention, saying, 'If you don't change the culture towards preventing disease, you will not improve this at a pace that is



acceptable in modern society, so there are significant inequalities that we need to address including cultural, social and educational inequalities.'



TEETH GROWN IN MICE

Researchers in Japan have successfully grown replacement teeth in mice, according to a report in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The study was led by Etsuko Ikeda from the Tokyo University of Science.

The team successfully implanted bioengineered seed-like tissue into the jaws of mice. These tissue 'germs' grew into fully functional teeth and

the team hopes that the technique could in future lead to engineered organ replacements.

'Our study provides the first evidence of a successful replacement of an entire and fully functioning organ in an adult body through the transplantation of bioengineered organ germ, reconstituted by single cell manipulation *in vitro*' said Takashi Tsuji, one of the study's authors and a Professor at Tokyo University of Science.

NHS INFORMATION CENTRE REPORT ON DENTISTS' EARNINGS PUBLISHED

Self-employed dentists in England and Wales earned on average £89,062 before tax in 2007/2008, according to the latest NHS Information Centre figures on dentists' earnings.

The Centre published the report *Dental earnings and expenses – England and Wales, 2007/08* detailing dentists' pay during the second year of the new dental contracts. The report considers only the earnings and expenses of full and part-time, self-employed primary care dentists who undertook some NHS work in England and Wales in the year, and covers both their NHS and private work.

Practising dentists who held a contract with a primary care trust (PCT) or local health board (LHB) to provide NHS dental services earned on average £126,807 before tax, with average gross earnings of £345,651 and average expenses of £218,843.

Dentists who worked in a practice but who did not hold a contract with a PCT or LHB earned on average £65,697 before tax, with average gross earnings of £99,208 and average expenses of £33,512.

The BDA said that the statistics reflected a year when dentists were working hard to make the new dental contract of 2006 work. John Milne, Chair of the BDA's General Dental Practice Committee, said, 'These statistics reflect the second year of operation of the 2006 dental contract in England and Wales, a time when dentists were working hard to overcome problems with the new arrangements and make them work for their patients. Many practitioners were contending with the uncertainty of potential clawback of their contract values. Dentists, almost uniquely in the NHS, carry the business risk of their surgeries and are responsible for providing premises, equipment and staff.'

Health minister Ann Keen said, 'NHS dentistry is improving and many dentists are now keen to expand their NHS work. Today's report confirms that NHS dentists have good levels of earnings.'

Dentists' earnings for 2007/08 cannot be compared with those of 2006/07 because the scheduling of payments made to some dentists following the introduction of the new contractual

arrangements on 1 April 2006 had a one-off effect in that financial year.

The report also looks at earnings and expenses by the working patterns of the dentists, their age and gender, their level of orthodontic activity and the strategic health authority in which they worked.

The NHS Information Centre also published a separate report which looks at dental earnings in Northern Ireland. *Dental earnings and expenses, Northern Ireland 2007/08 experimental statistics* shows all self-employed dentists earned on average £89,756 before tax, with contract-holding dentists earning on average £121,174 before tax and dentists without a contract earning on average £66,134 before tax.

The statistics for the report are experimental and differences in contractual arrangements between Northern Ireland and England and Wales mean that comparisons between the two reports cannot be made. The report for England and Wales is available online at www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/dentalearnexp0708 and the report for Northern Ireland at www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/dentalearnexp0708ni.

DENTAL NURSES COULD SUPPORT HOSPITAL STAFF

Dental nurses could be drafted in to take the pressure off hospital staff in Tyneside in the event of an increase in swine flu cases, according to the NHS. Dr Meng Khaw, director of public health for North Tyneside Primary Care Trust, said the plan would only be implemented if hospitals were under strain and that the dental nurses would not be expected to treat patients. The British Dental Association (BDA) has supported the idea.

Dr Khaw said that he was expecting the number of swine flu cases to increase during autumn. He added that as dental nurses were not qualified to treat medical conditions, they would be asked to do tasks such as taking phone calls, triaging patients, and providing information and signposting patients to other services, for which they would receive specific training.



CHINA BANS BAD BREATH IN SPACE

China is in the midst of recruiting 'super human beings' for its next space programme, with one prerequisite being that those with bad breath need not apply. Those wanting a chance at being the next astronaut for the Chinese space team must comply with a list of 100 rules which excludes those with body odour, tooth cavities or scars which may 'burst open' in space.

China will launch a space module next year and hopes for a docking by 2011. Dr Shi Bing Bing, of the 454th Air Force

Hospital in Nanjing, eastern China, said the new rules will help China send the best of the best into space. 'Bad body odour will affect fellow colleagues in the narrow confines of a space shuttle,' he said. 'These astronauts could be regarded as super human beings.'

The hospital is one of five medical institutions across the country conducting the second round of tests for its next batch of astronauts. Any candidate with a history of serious illness in the last three generations of their family is barred.



FIRST FOR PROFESSIONAL ENTRY PROGRAMME

King's College London Dental Institute recently celebrated the achievements of the Institute's first cohort of graduate entry students on its Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programme.

The students on this course have already completed a high-level (2.1 or higher) degree in bioscience and are exempted the first year of the King's College London BDS degree programme.

With an initial introductory course covering the aspects of dentistry included in the first year of the normally five-year dental programme, the graduate entry students join the five-year cohort in Year Two and proceed with them throughout the remainder of the dental programme. All students gain the same BDS degree, subsequent to satisfactory completion of all the

relevant requirements.

Professor Nairn Wilson, Dean of the Dental Institute, commented, 'It gives entry to a cohort of students who bring strengths such as maturity and a great determination to study dentistry.'

The graduate entry route has had 300 applicants applying for the 30 places in 2008/9. Through a rigorous process including the UKCAT, it has been possible to select students from unconventional backgrounds, but with proven academic ability and indications of outstanding aptitude for dentistry.

Professor Wilson added, 'It is important to report that 100% of the graduate entry students who sat the examination passed, many with merits and distinctions in the Final Examination.'

US ISSUES NEW AMALGAM REGULATION

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a final regulation classifying dental amalgam and its component parts – elemental mercury and a powder alloy – used in dental fillings. The regulation classifies dental amalgam into Class II (moderate risk). By classifying a device into Class II, the FDA can impose special controls to provide reasonable assurance of the safety and effectiveness of the device.

Specifically, the FDA recommended that the product labelling on dental amalgam should include a warning against the use of the product in patients with mercury allergy, a warning that dental professionals use adequate ventilation when handling dental amalgam and a statement discussing the scientific evidence on the benefits and risks of dental amalgam, including the risks of inhaled mercury vapour.

The FDA hopes the statement will help dentists and patients make informed decisions about the use of dental amalgam.

NHS STAFF VACANCY RATES INCREASE

Long-term staff vacancy rates in most areas across the NHS have risen for the first time in at least five years, according to a survey from The NHS Information Centre.

The report, *The NHS vacancies survey – England, 31 March 2009* reports on NHS vacancies as at 31 March 2009. It reports on both total vacancies and 'long-term' vacancies, which are those that have remained unfilled for three months or more.

Total vacancies among NHS medical and dental staff (hospital doctors and dentists excluding training grades) rose from 3.6% in 2008 to 5.2% in the latest survey, with three month vacancy rates rising from 0.9% to 1.5%.

DIARY

SEPTEMBER

2009 FDI Annual World Dental Congress

Date: 2-5 September 2009
Venue: Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre
Email: congress@fdiworldental.org
www.fdiworldental.org

Denplan National Conference

Date: 11-13 September 2009
Venue: Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel, Warwickshire
Email: events@denplan.co.uk
www.denplan.co.uk

OCTOBER

2nd Annual European Congress on Anti-Aging & Aesthetic Medicine (ECAAM)

Date: 5-17 October 2009
Venue: Congress Centre, Mainz, Frankfurt
Email: ssinger@tarsus.co.uk
www.anti-agingevents.com/europe

American Society of Human Genetics: Society of Craniofacial Genetics 32nd Annual Meeting and Symposium

Date: 20 October 2009
Venue: Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
www.craniofacialgenetics.org

Software and Technology for Product Development and Manufacturing Conference: Digital Manufacturing and Materials for Dentistry Seminar

Date: 20-21 October 2009
Venue: Ricoh Arena, Coventry

5th SOLA Laser Congress – International Society for Oral Laser Applications

Date: 22-25 October 2009
Venue: Vienna, Austria
www.sola-int.org

NOVEMBER

BDTA Dental Showcase

Date: 12-14 November 2009
Venue: NEC Birmingham
Tel: +44 (0) 1494 729959
www.dentalshowcase.com/visit

HIGH STANDARDS MET

The Maurice Wohl General Dental Practice Centre recently celebrated another year's success by awarding prizes for excellence to final year students. These prizes are awarded to students who fulfil the highest standards in all aspects of the Maurice Wohl GDP Centre's teaching, including clinical proficiencies, treatment planning, effective team facilitation and personal inter-relationship skills.

During the prize giving ceremony, Professor Nairn Wilson, the Dean and Head of School, together with Professor Stephen Dunne, congratulated the team at the GDP Centre, led by Dr Brian Davies. W&H Ltd and Henry Schein Ltd sponsored the event.

The Maurice Wohl GDP Centre is part of the Department of Primary Care Dentistry at the King's College Hospital Dental Institute. Final year students work in

an adult general practice environment in order to further develop their clinical acumen and to learn more about team leading skills and other aspects of successful practice management.

Students have a caseload of patients and work in conjunction with both qualified and trainee dental nurses in each of the Centre's ten surgeries. Day to day teaching takes place under the close supervision of experienced dental practitioners.

The prize winners were Mr Mark O'Hara (GDP prize winner), Miss Leila Akhlaghi (Certificate of Merit), Miss Angela Northfield (Certificate of Merit) and Mr Puneet Nagpal (Certificate of Merit). Separate awards were made to the winners of the Practice Leaflet Competition, who were Miss Leyli Bas-siri, Miss Kimya Ghadyani, Mr Mark O'Hara, Mr Nikesh Patel, Miss Hanel Kirit Patel, Mr Sanjay Sareen, Mr Sunny Sareen and Miss Janine Twite.



NEW PROFESSOR APPOINTED

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) has awarded Shahram Tabibi the title of Professor at the Institute for Postgraduate Dental Education. Amongst several other leading roles across dentistry, Professor Tabibi has worked at the University of Central Lancashire since 2003, initially as Course Leader of the MSc in Dental Implantology and Senior Lecturer in Oral Surgery, before becoming Director of the newly created Institute for Postgraduate Dental Education in 2006.

In his current role, Professor Tabibi has been responsible for curriculum devel-

opment, quality enhancement, learning, research and marketing, developing the Institute into one of the country's leading postgraduate dental establishments.

On his appointment, he said, 'I am delighted to have become a Professor at UCLan – I believe my appointment is a great endorsement of the work of the entire Institute for Postgraduate Dental Education since its establishment in 2006. Over this short period we have become recognised as a centre of excellence for the continuous professional development courses we offer dental practitioners.'