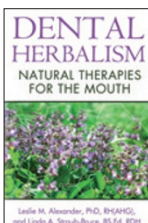


BOOK REVIEW



DENTAL HERBALISM – NATURAL THERAPIES FOR THE MOUTH

L. M. Alexander,
L. A. Straub-Bruce

Healing Arts Press

price £11.77; pp 442

ISBN 9781620551950

With a shift of focus in healthcare towards a holistic approach it falls on us, as dental professionals, to familiarise ourselves with complementary techniques, so as to better advise our patients of the options with regards to their oral health.

Part one of this easy-to-read guide of all things herbal explores the anatomy of the head and neck, providing a guide to the oral cavity and an introduction to the dental team. It establishes the importance of prevention, including plaque control and diet advice, and this is a recurrent theme throughout the book.

Part two explores the oral cavity's journey from infancy to old age, with 49 common conditions that may be encountered along the way, reminding the reader of the importance of attending their dentist, and the dangers of self-diagnosis.

Part three is a whirlwind tour of everything herbal, profiling 41 herbs that the authors feel should be integral to a herbalist's 'material medica'. It provides properties, indications, cautions and preparations, and puts the herbs into action, explaining how they can be applied in different situations.

The book closes with an overview of general issues affecting oral health and examines the link between oral health and systemic disease. It controversially includes a summary of 18 contentious issues that

affect oral health, with fluoride and amalgam noticeable mentions. The authors highlight this is an area they had difficulty in writing, and remind the reader that health-related decisions are always a personal choice.

The book implores safety and aims not to replace professional care or provide diagnoses. It reminds readers that although herbs may often act as excellent symptom alleviators, they are rarely curative, and so must be used only in support of conventional dental treatment.

Dental herbalism undoubtedly provides sound basic knowledge for herbalists and for dental professionals exploring complementary therapies, however, I would advise caution in recommending this book to patients as I feel aspects may challenge and contradict our professional advice. With regards to fluoride, although not condemning its use, it in no way highlights its importance in caries prevention, and, even with the safety warnings in '*Dental Herbalism*', I still worry patients may potentially delay seeking treatment and the correct diagnosis.

S. CONROY

BDA MUSEUM

'FATHER OF BDA' TURNS 200

This month marks the bicentenary of the birth of Sir John Tomes (1815-1895): inventor, researcher, pioneer, reformer and father of the British Dental Association (BDA).

John Tomes was born on 21 March 1815 at Weston-on-Avon, Gloucestershire. In 1836, after a five-year apprenticeship with an apothecary in Evesham, he entered the medical schools of King's College and Middlesex Hospitals. During his training he extracted many teeth and although he was doing well at his medical studies, he decided to abandon them to pursue dentistry. At that time no qualification was needed to be a dentist. In 1840 he was appointed dental surgeon to King's College Hospital and opened his own practice in Marylebone. Three years later he became dental surgeon at Middlesex Hospital, where he gave a course of lectures on 'Dental Physiology and Surgery'. These were published in a book in 1848.

Tomes' fibrils

Tomes began his research into teeth whilst still a medical student. He used objective data collection and personal experience as the basis for his papers. He kept a register at the hospital of every case he treated and used these to analyse which teeth were most at risk of disease. His advice on dental surgery was partly gleaned from his experience of removing the decayed portion of two of his own wisdom teeth and filling them with amalgam.

In 1838 he submitted his first paper to the Royal Society. It described the microscopic structure of human and animal teeth and compared teeth with bone. He submitted four more papers to the Royal Society between 1849 and 1856 and was elected a Fellow in

VIEW FROM MY WINDOW

Gerald Feaver writes: 'A large floor to ceiling window which dates back to 1828 looks out from this Harley Street practice on to a typical London view.'

'In spite of being in the centre of London it is a quiet peaceful haven in the midst of the buzz and bustle of the city.'

Send the view from your window to r.doherty@nature.com.





1850. His final paper was his most famous. In it he proposed that dentine is sensitive because it has structures containing fibres connected to the pulp. These became known as 'Tomes' fibrils'.

Technical inventions

Tomes was a practical man as well as an academic. His experience of extractions, along with his study of the shape and size of each tooth and their roots, spurred him to design new styles of forceps adapted for different teeth. Although it seems unlikely that Tomes was the first to develop this design, as Cyrus Fay had presented a similar design to the Society of Arts in 1824, he must be credited with popularising them. Crucially Tomes published his designs and collaborated with the instrument maker Jean Marie Evrard ensuring his forceps appeared in dental catalogues. Tomes' other major invention was the dentifactor. This was a mechanical way to carve ivory dentures. The dentifactor was quicker and produced a more accurate fit than carving by hand. Unfortunately for Tomes it was overshadowed by the introduction of new denture material – vulcanite.

Politics

Early in his career Tomes saw the need for official recognition of dentists as professionals but it was not until the mid-1850s that he could devote much attention to this matter. Numerous letters were written by leading dentists to the Royal College of Surgeons of England urging that a qualification for dentistry should be established. Tomes was encouraged to set up a proper body to negotiate with the College. The Odontological Society was formed and the

College finally agreed to establish a specialist department and create the award of a Licence in Dental Surgery (LDS).

The College had not organised any training, however. Therefore, Tomes and others founded the London School of Dental Surgery where he became the first lecturer in dental physiology and surgery. The first exams were set for March 1860. As the College wanted Tomes as an examiner it quickly made him a member and awarded him an LDS.

Tomes now turned his attention to ensuring that only qualified persons could practise and this required registration. He managed to obtain support for an Act of Parliament which was passed in 1878 restricting the use of the word dentist to suitably qualified persons. To enforce the act, Tomes and other leading dentists formed the British Dental Association in 1880 and he was the first BDA president.

Final years

In 1886 Tomes was knighted for eminent services rendered to his profession. Soon afterwards he resigned from the BDA, retiring to his home in Caterham, Surrey. The last honour bestowed on him was the creation in February 1894 of a triennial prize in his name by the Royal College of Surgeons.

The many objects used and made by Sir John Tomes are now on display in the BDA Museum including his dental chair, spittoon, and instrument stand as well as his scrapbook of sketches. The magnificent portrait of Tomes (pictured) and bronze bust by Gilbert Bayes are also on display in the foyer at Wimpole Street.

BRITISH DENTAL ASSOCIATION
(THE 'COMPANY')
(REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AND WALES
WITH COMPANY NUMBER 14161)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of the British Dental Association will be held at 9.30 am on Thursday 7 May 2015 in the Exchange Auditorium of the Manchester Central Convention Complex, Petersfield, M2 3GX, for transaction of the following business:

ORDINARY RESOLUTIONS

1. To receive and adopt the Company's financial statements for year ended 30 September 2014, including the directors' and auditors' reports, as included in the 13 March 2015 edition of the *British Dental Journal*
2. To reappoint BDO Stoy Hayward LLP ('BDO') as the Company's auditors to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration
3. That Dr Stuart Johnston be elected President for 2016–2017
4. To decide the time and date of the next Annual General Meeting in 2016.

Dated 13 March 2015

BY ORDER OF THE PRINCIPAL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Registered Office:
64 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8YS

NOTE: A member entitled to attend, speak and vote at the Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy who need not be a member to attend and exercise all or any of his rights at the meeting.

DAVID ARKUSH

We are sad to announce the death of dentist David Arkush, who was 100 years old. Dr Arkush is survived by his widow Shirley and his son, Jonathan.

In the 8 August 2014 issue of the *BDJ* we reported a gathering of the Past and Present Directors and Colonels Commandant of the Royal Army Dental Corps to celebrate Dr Arkush's 100th birthday. He was thought to be the oldest surviving Ex-Far-East Prisoner-of-War from World War II.