

CONFERENCE REPORT

Mouth Care Matters conference: 'Making it sustainable – can you afford not to?'

On Friday 7 July 2017 Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust hosted the Mouth Care Matters conference. The conference aimed to showcase the improvements the Mouth Care Matters initiative has made to patient care across 13 trusts in Kent, Surrey and Sussex and most importantly discuss how to make these changes sustainable.

Mili Doshi, Consultant in Special Care Dentistry, opened the conference with an overview of how the hospital programme began, describing how Surrey and Sussex Healthcare Trust (SaSH) was the first to recruit a 'Mouth Care team' at East Surrey Hospital. The team which Dr Doshi leads worked to develop a training and education package that could be adapted and rolled out. Following this successful pilot, Health Education England funded a further 12 trusts to recruit a Mouth Care Lead for 12 months to implement the Mouth Care Matters programme.

Professor Stephen Lambert-Humble, HEE Postgraduate Dental Dean and the driving force behind Mouth Care Matters, spoke of his passion for improving oral health and his vision for the future. He was followed by Lead Economist from the KSS AHSN Richard Lee-Wright, who gave a fascinating talk around the health economics work that was commissioned to look at whether the initiative has saved the Trust money.

Chief Dental Officer for England Sara Hurley delivered a passionate speech about the importance of 'putting the mouth back into the body'. She also described why she wants to see the Mouth Care Matters initiative in every hospital in England.

Dental Core Trainee Jessica Mann presented the baseline statistics from the programme, highlighting that none of the Trust had a mouth care policy prior to implementation.

A number of presentations were given by Mouth Care Leads; highlights included:

- James McGoldrick, a speech and language therapist and Marcella Adair, a dental nurse, spoke about their first hand experiences on the wards and how mouth care was an area of care that needed to improve
- Almas Ataie presented a powerful patient story on the impact the failure to provide mouth care had on a vulnerable patient. Almas also described that on a positive note this case made the Trust realise that they needed to improve the oral healthcare of patients
- Jenny Chay shared a personal story about how the mouth is often forgotten about in overall care
- Loraine Lee talked about her day-to-day role and the importance of having a permanent lead in the Trust
- Jessica Cubberley shared her experiences of being on a ward and the situations where mouth care may get missed due to the daily pressures and how she uses this in her training



Mouth Care Leads at the Mouth Care Matters conference hosted by Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust on Friday 7 July 2017

- Sarah Haslam and Samantha King talked about the benefits and challenges of classroom training and wards-based training
- Linda Edwards took delegates through how important it is to have the right tools for mouth care on the ward. She also explained what wards should have available
- Tracey Peters talked about her role as a lead and the support she gives staff, patients and carers
- Rebecca Low gave a powerful talk, describing how she helped liaise so that a young lady whose whole world had been turned upside down, who then also lost her front teeth, could have some dentures made, so she could still smile at her four-year-old daughter.

Posters produced by the leads were displayed for everyone to read. There was a standing ovation for all the Mouth Care Leads for working so hard in their trusts and as a network to develop the Mouth Care Matters initiative.

One delegate said: 'The testimonials from the Leads were the absolute proof (as if we needed it) that this is incredibly important and worthwhile for our patients' wellbeing, comfort and dignity'.

Dr Doshi then spoke about the evaluation of the programme in trusts so far and the improvements that are being made. At SaSH where the programme was developed the mouth care role is now a trust-funded permanent role. Mouth care recording has also increased by 75%. Mouth care training is now mandatory for nursing staff, it is now on the junior doctors' programme and there are pathways for urgent oral care.

The day ended with a talk about the future of Mouth Care Matters from programme lead Samit Shah. ■