

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. Please direct your correspondence to the News Editor, Arveen Bajaj at the BDJ, 64 Wimpole Street WIG 8YS or by email to bdj@bda.org

GDC launch new guidance

The General Dental Council has published new guidance for local Practitioner Advice and Support Schemes. The guidance aims to support existing schemes and offers advice to anyone who wants to set up a new scheme in their area.

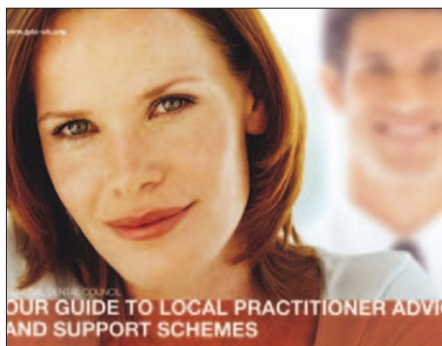
Practitioner Advice and Support Schemes are voluntary schemes, organised and run by local clinicians, which are designed to detect and address problems of poor professional performance in dentists. They give dentists support and advice, and play an important role in patient protection by helping to resolve performance issues at an early stage.

The GDC's new guidance describes the respective roles of the GDC and Practitioner Advice and Support Schemes and provides a model scheme, based on examples of best practice, that anyone who is setting up a new scheme can use.

The GDC believes that although Practitioner Advice and Support Schemes are currently aimed at dentists, they could be extended to cover professionals complementary to dentistry (PCDs) in the future, following the forthcoming launch of PCD registration.

It is currently working towards a system for recognising those schemes which comply with the new guidance and intends to publish full details of this as soon as they are finalised.

The guidance, 'Our Guide to Local Practitioner Advice and Support Schemes' is available from the GDC website at www.gdc-uk.org.



Winning portfolio



The Colyer Prize of the Odontological Section of the Royal Society of Medicine for 2003–2004 has been awarded to Dr Ian Needleman, (pictured above) Senior Lecturer in Periodontology and Director, International Centre for Evidence-Based Oral Health, Eastman Dental Institute, UCL, London. The award is made for the best original work in dental science completed in the last five years in the United Kingdom. Dr Needleman's winning portfolio, entitled *Islands in Search of Continents*, comprises research in systematic review methodology and periodontology. Dr Needleman was delighted to receive the award and expressed his thanks to those colleagues who had contributed to this research. "It is great to receive recognition for this work and for our research teams. Systematic reviews have great potential to inform clinical research methods and are influential in changing healthcare practice and policy", he said.

Report on NHS dentistry reforms published

A new government agency report has concluded that the NHS dentistry reforms due to be in place in October 2005 may result in dentists cutting their NHS commitments.

The National Audit Office – which scrutinises public spending by government departments and other public bodies on behalf of Parliament and is independent of the Government – recently published a report that highlighted concerns about how the new system would be run.

The report stated that though there was a strong rationale for modernising NHS dentistry, significant risks would have to be managed if the DoH's new arrangements were to be effective and provide value for money.

Scepticism and a lack of detail about how the system was to operate could result in dentists reducing their NHS commitments.

It added that under the new arrangements, PCTs would be assuming new roles and responsibilities for implementing the new system such as commissioning the services, but had little experience of high street dentistry.

The report highlighted concerns that patients may not understand their entitlements, what services were available on the NHS and what they were paying for.

The National Audit Office report, *Reforming NHS Dentistry: Ensuring effective management of risks* is available at www.nao.org.uk.

DIARY

January 2005

OSAP 4th Annual Intermediate-Level Infection Control and Occupational Safety and Health Course

Date: 24-27.01.04

Venue: Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Georgia

Tel: 800-298-OSAP (6727)

www.osap.org.

International Dental Foundation 54th International Alpine Dental Conference

Date: 29.01.05-05.02.05

Venue: Hotel Annapurna, Courcheval 1850, France

Contact: Robert Wallace

Tel: +44 (0) 207 235 0788

Fax: +44 (0) 207 235 0767

Email: idf@idfdentalconference.com

www.idfdentalconference.com

March 2005

83rd General Session & Exhibition of the IADR, 34th Annual Meeting of the AADR, 29th Annual Meeting of the CADR

Date: 9-12.03.05

Venue: Baltimore Convention Centre

www.dentalresearch.org

April 2005

Academy of Laser Dentistry Source 2005: Lasers in Dentistry

Date: 6-9.04.05

Venue: New Orleans Marriott Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Tel: 1-877-527-3776

Email: memberservices@laserdentistry.org

www.source2005.org

Tofu for mending teeth

A new Tofu-based biomaterial which could help combat periodontal disease and mend bones is being developed. It is hoped that surgeons will be able to use it as a means of combating periodontal disease as it allows for regeneration of the bones around weakened teeth and other dental implants.

The idea is the brainchild of Dr Matteo Santin – a senior lecturer at the University of Brighton's School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Studies – who has worked in the field of biomaterials since 1991.

He claims that the de-fatted soybean curds, which are derived from inexpensive natural products actively encourage the formation of new bone growth, have a low potential for immunogenicity and are completely biodegradable.

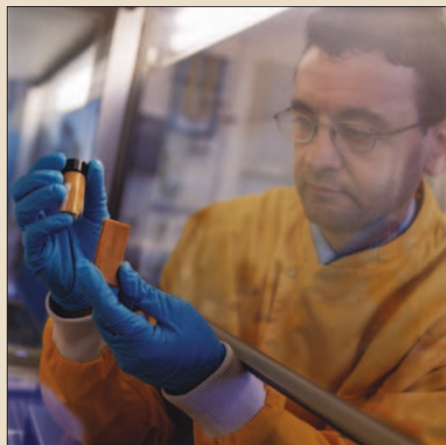
"Our new generation biomaterial gives dental implants a much greater chance of success. Easy for dentists to use, it will be suitable for anyone who has lost a tooth, making implants available to many more people. The innovation is that it accelerates the growth of the patient's own bone, rather than using an artificial substitute which the body could react against.

"Crucially it also combats inflammation. We're keen to develop a gel or a paste which dentists will be able to use in any mouth, irrespective of the severity of the bone defect," he explained.

As well as its use as a bone filler, the biomaterial also has the potential to be used in other applications, such as wound dressings. The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) is investing £149,000 in the project through its Invention and Innovation programme. Dr Santin is joined by Dr Jonathan Wilkinson, of technology transfer organisation WessexBio as well as a team of materials experts

from the University of Naples. The team will work with specialist medical staff to produce specific formulations for surgical applications and further substantiate the performance of the Tofu-based biomaterial. NESTA is a non-departmental public body investing in innovators and working to improve the climate for creativity in the UK.

Mark White, Director of Invention and Innovation at NESTA, said that the Tofu-based biomaterial was cheap and simple to manufacture, and was the first to integrate quickly with a patient's own tissues, and encourage re-growth of the surrounding tissue.



Dr Matteo Santin with the new biomaterial

Worldwide initiative to reduce tobacco consumption

A public health treaty which may contribute to the reduction of tobacco consumption worldwide will become part of international law on 28 February 2005. The World Health Organisation Framework Convention in Tobacco Control has been ratified by 40 countries – including those within the European community – in the past 17 months.



WHO Headquarters in Geneva

The 40 countries that have become contracting parties to the treaty make it the first international legally binding public health treaty under the auspices of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The provisions of the treaty set international standards in tobacco price and tax increases, tobacco advertising and sponsorship, labelling, illicit trade and second-hand smoke.

According to the FDI World Dental Federation, who support the treaty, the important role of healthcare professionals in tobacco control has high priority and it believes that dentists have proven to be as effective as physicians in tobacco control activities.

Dr J T Barnard, the Executive Director of the FDI said, "Dentists need to play an active role in smoking cessation with their patients and dental associations need to become effective public health advocates."

New achievement

The Ghauri Dental Centre in Shepherds Bush, London, was recently awarded a BDA Good Practice scheme award. The Centre was established over 80 years ago and has been under the ownership of Dr Ghauri for the last 30 years. It provides dental care to over 12,000 patients, ninety percent of whom are NHS registered. The centre is continually developing and is in the process of adding advanced facilities at the practice.



Dr A H Ghauri (third from left) and team being presented a BDA Good Practice Plaque by BDA President Dr A Kravitz (second from right)