

“We are now hovering on the brink of 10,000 CPD users”

CPD reaches 10,000...almost

To be frank, when we started the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in association with Eastman CPD just three years ago, we had no idea whether it was going to be successful or not. It was one of those initiatives which seemed like a good idea at the time and one that we felt we ‘should’ be offering to readers in the light of the implementation of mandatory CPD by the General Dental Council (GDC).

The initial response was very gratifying. The sudden subsequent growth meant that we had to change our plans somewhat rapidly since the paper-based original method of sending in answers by post and fax all but overwhelmed us. We then moved to encourage respondents to use the electronic route and thanks to the efficiency of Eastman CPD and the team at Smile-on all but a tiny handful are now administered through this medium. This is pleasing in that it has encouraged readers to use the Internet and also to explore the journal on-line. Our regular monitoring of hits and visitors to the *BDJ* website shows us the steady increase in this traffic and from this issue onwards we will be publishing a box on the contents pages showing the latest figures. As you will see, in July we had 431,483 hits and 48,019 unique visitors. This is a valuable indication of much wider use of the *BDJ* that we will be building on in future and which we will be detailing soon, along with innovative changes to the journal in 2007.

What has also been pleasing is that the number of registrants to the programme has continued to increase so that we are now hovering on the brink of 10,000 CPD users. This is a fantastic achievement, not just for the journal but also for dentistry. It means that approximately half the BDA Membership and over one third of the active dental profession in the UK are regular users of the programme, which, to paraphrase a popular advertising slogan makes it ‘probably the biggest CPD dental programme in the UK’.

As you will see (News, page 258), to mark the 10,000th registrant we will be awarding that individual a rather handsome trophy. If you haven’t already registered please do so now and increase your chance of being recognised, as well as having a notable addition to your practice décor, mantelpiece or grand piano!

Gratifying as they are, numbers alone do not necessarily indicate quality and this is a matter that we also take seriously in developing the programme. Our research and anecdotal experience suggests that participants find value from studying papers that they might not normally have even read and also report that they ‘read articles in a different way’ as a result. We are always pleased to receive feedback and would be particularly appreciative of comments and suggestions as to how we can make the programme of even greater value.

One development that we will be introducing next year will be a CPD programme in *BDA News*. This is not only in response to your feedback but also a realisation that many seem to think that the ‘C’ in CPD is for clinical. Professional development is about issues in addition to clinical, as the GDC recognised from the beginning of its Lifelong Learning philosophy. Consequently *BDA News*’ CPD will major on practice management, finance, aspects of dental business, health and safety and so forth. This will then join the fledgling self-test programme in *Vital*, aimed at the wider dental team for when CPD for DCPs becomes mandatory from 2008 onwards and will serve to emphasise the co-ordination of this benefit across the BDA’s portfolio of publications.

There is one further aspect that we will be pursuing in coming times and that is the international reach of CPD programmes, a matter which applies to meetings, seminars and congresses, and with the worldwide web with access to programmes based in other countries. Currently there is no internationally agreed or accepted basis on the recognition of other ‘nationally’ generated hours, points or credits. Such a system would be of great value to us all and the FDI World Dental Federation may well be the perfect organisation to initiate and co-ordinate such a scheme. We will be raising this at their Congress later this month.

So, now to action. Having read this, if you are registered go ahead and complete the CPD in this issue, if you haven’t yet registered you know what you need to do to join the club. Happy developing!

Stephen Hancocks OBE, Editor in Chief
doi: 10.1038/sj.bdj.4814040