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## The first 'practitioner with a special interest' service for West Sussex

*An innovative training programme has been established in West Sussex for GPs with a special interest in periodontology. This article gives an outline of the course, which aims to enhance periodontal care in the area through a local clinical network.*

The Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) Deanery has, in collaboration with West Sussex Primary Care Trust (WSPCT, formerly the Mid Sussex Primary Care Trust), funded the first training programme for practitioners with a special interest (DwSI) in periodontology. The week-long programme was held at the Chichester Medical Education Centre during April 2006.

The objective of the DwSI service is to provide excellent periodontal care in the form of a local clinical network, which encompasses both the primary and secondary sectors. The service will be run through West Sussex Primary Care Trust under the auspices of David Cheshire, Consultant in Restorative Dentistry. Consultant outreach into the DwSI practices will be an integral feature of the service.

David had input from all the lecturers regarding the structure and content of the programme, with considerable and notable input from Phil Ower and Graham Smart. In this pilot programme, each DwSI holds a contract with the WSPCT to provide a half-day of periodontal care and this service covers the whole of West Sussex. The performance of the service will be captured electronically to facilitate audit, clinical governance and further development of the service. Revalidation of the DwSIs will be linked to an audit of their performance.

When WSPCT invited dental practitioners to apply for the post, they received 40 expressions of interest, of which 19 applicants returned forms. The applicants were assessed against the competency framework produced by the British Society of Periodontology (BSP) and the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) (FDGP(UK)) for the attainment of the Faculty's key skills.



Professor Stephen Lambert-Humble presents certificates of accreditation to four of the five practitioners (left to right: Peter Saner, Phil Ower, Magdalena Butler, David Cheshire, Stephen Lambert-Humble, Judy Beckerson and Robin Lesley). The fifth participant, Ben Zanjani, is not present

Nine practitioners were interviewed by representatives of the PCT, KSS Deanery, the FGDP(UK) and a member of BSP. Five candidates, Ben Zanjani, Robin Lesley, Judy Beckerson, Magdalena Butler and Peter Saner, were selected for the training programme. The assessment of the candidates did not end there; their understanding of the pre-course reading and the

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content of each lecture was assessed by means of an MCQ. The candidates were required to pass each MCQ in order to be considered for the position. The candidates did have the satisfaction of ‘turning the tables’ when assessing the lecturers’ presentation and content.

Whilst focussing on the diagnosis and management of periodontal diseases, the course also placed emphasis on communication, behaviour modification, treatment planning, accessing evidence based knowledge and smoking cessation. It was preceded by pre-course reading on the aetiological, immunological and microbiological aspects of periodontology.

Prominent periodontal lecturers such as Bernie Keisser, Graham Smart, Phil Ower and Ulpee Darbar contributed to the course. A superb insight into the addiction of smoking was given by Gay Sutherland of the Tobacco Research Unit at Kings College. Gay outlined smoking cessation protocols and this was then enthusiastically reinforced by Kerry Whyley and Sue Davidson, who are co-coordinators of the West Sussex smoking cessation service. Mike Mulcahy, then Dean of the FGDP(UK), emphasised the importance of obtaining key skills

and Charlotte Feinman spoke about the problems associated with chronic disease management.

Smoking cessation is a key part of the DwSI periodontal service and each practitioner has a trained smoking cessation advisor in their practice. This smoking cessation service will also contribute directly to the already well-established local service. Diabetic monitoring will also be incorporated into the periodontal service.

It is hoped that the service framework will help liberate the talents of dental practitioners as well as enhance the provision of periodontal care in West Sussex.

*As well as acknowledging the contribution of Phil Ower and Graham Smart, David Cheshire would like to thank Stephen Lambert-Humble and Graham Gilmour of the KSS Deanery and Mike Mulcahy of the FGDP(UK) for their support. He would also like to thank Sonja Bescoby of West Sussex PCT for her insight and the opportunity to develop this clinical network, and acknowledge the support of the West Sussex Dental Practitioners and the LDC.*