editorial

India holds First National Workshop on Evidence-Based Dentistry

Anmol S Kalha

Senior Professor and Head of Department of Orthodontics, College of Dental Sciences, Davangere, India

The First National Workshop on Evidence-Based Dentistry in India was held at the College of Dental Sciences, Davangere between the 8th and 11th March 2001. With over 85 delegates registered from all over India, it was perhaps the largest ever dedicated workshop on evidence-based dentistry in the world.

The first National Workshop on Evidence-Based Dentistry was convened by the Centre for Evidence-Based Dentistry and Informatics (CEBDi) in India on 8–11 March 2001. The workshop was organised under the aegis of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bangalore, with active collaboration and guidance from Dr Derek Richards, from the Centre for Evidence-based Dentistry (CEBD), Oxford, UK and Dr Asbjørn Jokstad, from the University of Oslo, Norway and a member of the FDI commission. The workshop was aimed at providing comprehensive exposure to and hands-on experience of evidence-based dentistry. The delegates represented a very wide cross-section of the dental and medical fraternity including senior teachers, policy makers and general practitioners. A 2-day instructional course for the Indian faculty preceded the workshop. This was conducted by Drs Richards and Jokstad.

The national workshop then commenced with an orientation session introduced by Dr Anmol Kalha. Dr Richards outlined the specific aims of the workshop and briefed the delegates about the interactive small-group sessions. Dr Sukhdeep Singh, from CEBDi, briefly explained the glossary of terms and study designs. An elegant, formal

inaugural ceremony included a minute's silence for the national disaster in Gujarat. A multimedia invocation and lighting of the lamp of learning was followed by Dr VV Subba Reddy, the Principal of the College of Dental Sciences and the Chairman of CEBDi, welcoming the invitees, dignitaries and delegates. He also acknowledged the role of Dr Kalha in bringing the concept of evidence-based dentistry to Davangere. The Honourable Vice-Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Dr Chandrashekar Shetty inaugurated the workshop and congratulated the organisers and the institution for having taken a progressive outlook and this step forward in quality education. Dr Bhasker Rao, Vice-President of the Dental Council of India (DCI) and Dean of the Dental Faculty, also praised this first workshop on behalf of the DCI and suggested the need for inclusion of the evidence-based approach in the curriculum. He also formally launched the website of the CEBDi (www.cods-net/cebd/). Shri Shamanur Shivashankarappa, former MP and the Secretary of the Bapuji Educational Association, while thanking the invited guests and foreign dignitaries, committed the support of the management for this

venture, and introduced a CD-ROM on evidence-based dentistry.

Dr Jokstad finally formally conveyed the appreciation of the FDI and announced that Dr Kalha and his team were being invited to conduct a session on evidence-based dentistry at the forthcoming FDI world convention at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in October 2001. Shri Shamanur Shivashankarappa presented mementos to all the invited dignitaries and Dr Kalha ended the inaugural function with a vote of thanks.

Highlights of the scientific sessions

The scientific session on day one began with an introductory lecture by Dr Kalha, who spoke on the clinical value of evidence-based decision-making. Dr Richards spoke about the basics of evidence-based dentistry and the importance of asking the right question. This was followed by an instructive presentation by Dr R Venkata Subramanyam about searching for literature and evidence using electronic media, the internet and Medline.

Small-group exercises based on the delegates' own clinical problems followed. The facilitated groups worked through clinical question formulation and searching for information. The delegates appreciated the concept of interactive participation and a lively debate was generated during the feedback session at the end of the day.

The second day's scientific session began with an interesting presentation

by Dr Shailesh Lele, who simplified the concepts of statistics. Dr Richards introduced the concept of critical appraisal and discussed randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews. This was interspersed with small-group appraisal of a clinical trial and a systematic review. The feedback sessions following the small-group work were lively and enthusiastic. Between the small-group appraisal sessions Dr

Jokstad gave a very informative presentation on the clinical usefulness of evidence.

The workshop ended on a positive note and the visiting faculty were presented with mementoes and certificates of appreciation. After the formal closure of the workshop the faculty undertook a self-appraisal exercise, making a critical evaluation of all the presentations of the workshop in order

to improve the quality of any future events. The workshop achieved its major purpose of focussing on the relevance of evidence-based dentistry in the Indian subcontinent and, perhaps, south-east Asia. It also reflects a collaborative effort between the CEBDi in India and the CEBD in the UK, and will hopefully pave the way for other events in future.