

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, The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW or by email to a.bajaj@nature.com

DDU EDUCATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

In our coverage of the Dental Defence Union (DDU) Educational awards in *BDJ* volume 203 issue 11 (*BDJ* 2007; 203: 627), the available space unfortunately prevented us from including the award winners in all categories. We are pleased to report all the winners here.

The winner in the category DCP Teacher of the Year was Jane Holt from Leeds Dental Institute, whose presentation described a six-step decision making pathway for DCPs confronted with an ethical dilemma. Speaking about her win, Jane said 'I'm honoured to be nominated for this award by my students but I'm also fortunate to work in a team with such enthusiasm for dental education.'

In the category Vocational Teacher of the Year, the winner was Anne Milarvie from the Yorkshire Deanery. 'I am really flattered to have been selected for this award which recognises and encourages the efforts and passion of all VT teachers in helping to develop the next generation of dentists,' said Anne. 'Vocational training is such an important phase in a dentist's career, as it is at this point that the technical education they have been taught as students is integrated with the practicalities of general practice and all that this entails.'

The judges were impressed by the quality of the presentations made by all the finalists. The runner up in the DCP Teacher category was Judy Fraser from the School of Professionals Complementary to Dentistry, Portsmouth, with Catherine Brady from the Oxford Deanery the runner up in the VT Teacher category.

DOH LAUNCHES NEW SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE



Members of the document's working group (left to right): Gill Davies (BASCD), Colette Bridgman (chair), Tony Jenner (Department of Health), Clare Jones (collator), Selina Master (BSDH), Mark Taylor (BDA), Liana Zoitopoulos (BASCD) and Amit Bose (Department of Health)

The Department of Health has launched new supplementary guidance focusing on oral health improvement in adults and children with disabilities.

Valuing people's oral health. A good practice guide for improving the oral health of disabled children and adults carries forward many of the key principles included in *Valuing people*, the Government's White Paper on learning disability. The document is intended to influence the provision of key actions, oral health programmes and services required to improve and secure oral health for children and adults with impairment and disability.

The Deputy Chief Dental Officer, Tony Jenner, said, '*Valuing people's oral health* is an important document advising best practice. The NHS has a responsibility to ensure the equality of provision of care to all groups in society. If implemented

correctly, this guidance will be very helpful to PCTs in improving the oral health of the local disabled population.'

The guidance recommends that oral health needs to become integrated into holistic health policy at all levels and should be included in every individual care plan. Effective integration of oral health into the mainstream health agenda is required to ensure oral health issues are not omitted or dealt with separately and seen as 'the dentist's' problem.

Good oral health is an important factor in overall health and well-being for people with impairment and disability and its benefits should not be underestimated. Among the document's key recommendations are building competence through training and sharing of knowledge, and providing information in appropriate formats to overcome communication barriers.

SIMPLE PUSH FILLING EFFECTIVE AGAINST DECAY



A simple technique using a preformed crown offers an improved and effective method to fight tooth decay in primary molars, according to research published online in the open access journal *BMC Oral Health*.

The Hall Technique uses preformed metal crowns pushed onto teeth with no local anaesthesia or drilling. The decay is sealed into the tooth by the crown and, as sugars in the diet are unable to reach it, the decay slows or even stops.

The research, which was carried out by a team at Dundee Dental Hospital and School, treated 132 children who each had one tooth filled with a traditional filling and one tooth treated using the Hall Technique. The majority of dentists, carers and children preferred the Hall Technique to traditional 'drill and fill' methods.

Dr Nicola Innes, who led the research team, explained, 'There has been a lot of debate in the UK over the best method to tackle tooth decay in children's molars. Preformed metal crowns are not widely used in Scotland as they're not viewed as a realistic option by dentists. We found, however, that almost all the patients, parents and dentists in our study preferred the Hall Technique crowns and also children benefited from them.'

Around one in two children in Scotland has visible tooth decay at the age of five and most have to accept toothache as part of normal everyday life. Two years after receiving the Hall Technique crown, however, the children's dental health significantly improved, with less pain and fewer abscesses and failed fillings than with traditional filling methods.

Dr Innes concluded 'Children, parents and dentists prefer the Hall Technique. It allows dentists to achieve a filling with a high quality seal, which means we can safely leave decay in baby teeth, and not be forced to drill it away. Hall crowns will not suit every child, or every decayed tooth in a child's mouth, but dentists may find it a useful treatment option for managing decay in children's back teeth.'

The paper, *The Hall Technique: a randomized controlled clinical trial of a novel method of managing carious primary molars in general dental practice; acceptability of the technique and outcomes at 23 months* (*BMC Oral Health* 2007; 7: 18, DOI 10.1186/1472-6831-7-18) can be viewed online at www.biomedcentral.com/bmcoralhealth/.

The authors' manual on the Hall Technique is freely available at www.scottishdental.org/resources/HallTechnique.htm.

CAUTIOUS RESPONSE TO NHS DENTISTRY BUDGET INCREASE

The Department of Health has announced an 11% budget increase for the commissioning of primary dental care services in 2008/9. The £2,081 million budget is detailed in the document *Operating framework for the NHS in England for 2008/9*, which also sets primary care trusts the objective of ensuring year-on-year improvements in the number of patients accessing primary care NHS dental services.

The increase has been given a qualified welcome by the British Dental Association (BDA). BDA Chief Executive Peter Ward said, 'For too long investment in NHS dentistry has failed to keep pace with funding for other areas of the NHS. The BDA is pleased to see that the profession has at last been listened to and that NHS dentistry is to receive a much-needed financial boost.' He continued, 'The real challenge now is ensuring that the money is spent putting patients, rather than targets, at the centre of NHS dentistry.'

Dr Roger Mathews, Chief Dental Officer for Denplan, also sounded a note of caution in his response to the announcement. 'While we are always encouraged by additional funding going into primary dental services, we have grave concerns for how much of this extra funding will benefit dentists with existing NHS contracts and therefore patients directly,' he said. 'With the loss of ring-fencing now looming closer, and value for the taxpayer remaining the first priority, pressures on UDA values will only intensify.'

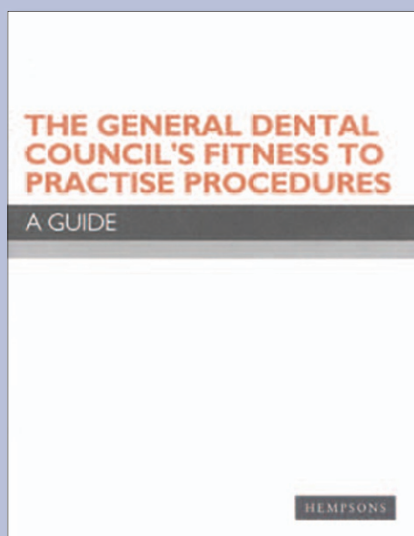
APOLOGY AND CORRECTION

The titles of online research paper E2 and the Education paper in the contents of *BDJ* 204 no. 1 were printed incorrectly. The titles should have read 'Attitudes and practice in the provision of removable partial dentures' and 'A description of the new technologies used in transforming dental education', respectively. We wish to apologise unreservedly to the authors of both papers and to readers for this mistake.

HEMPSONS PUBLISH GDC GUIDANCE

The dental team at Hempsons Solicitors (www.hempsons.co.uk) has just published a guide to the GDC's new fitness to practise procedures. Chris Morris, *BDJ* Legal Advisor, Head of the Hempsons dental team and dually-qualified dentist and solicitor, said 'We act for a large number of dentists who find themselves embroiled in the GDC's fitness to practise procedures and we know just how stressful this can be. The introduction of new legislation in July 2007 significantly changed the way in which the GDC deals with these cases and we thought the time was right to produce a user-friendly guidebook that might allay some of the anxieties and uncertainties that these procedures may cause dentists.'

Copies of the book, entitled *The General Dental Council's fitness to practise*



procedures. A guide, can be requested by contacting Chris Morris or Richard Creamer at dental@hempsons.co.uk or on 020 7839 0278.

SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR FOR DENTAL COMPLAINTS SERVICE

The majority of complaints logged by the Dental Complaints Service (DCS) are resolved within three working days, according to the Service's first annual report.

Derek Prentice, Chair of the DCS, said 'Speed is crucial. All the evidence shows that the longer a complaint takes to resolve, the less likely it is to be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the parties involved who tend to become more and more entrenched.'

The DCS is an independent body set up by the General Dental Council (GDC) to help resolve complaints about private dental care. The report shows that the Service logged more than 1,500 complaints in its first year of operation, more than half of which were resolved over the telephone.

The success of the Service is also due to the very positive response it has received from dental professionals, who have praised it for its even-handedness. 'In addition to speed of response and action, we've built the service with an emphasis on being fair and impartial in all we do, and take pride in the transparency of our process,' said Mr Prentice.

More than 5,000 enquiries were made to the Service using its local rate complaints hotline (08456 120540) over the year. Half were about NHS dental services, which were redirected to the appropriate NHS contact. Of the 1,500-plus legitimate complainants, over three-quarters were initially referred back to their dental practice's own complaints procedures. Of those, fewer than one in five returned to the Dental Complaints Service with their complaint unresolved.

'Resolving complaints successfully is a crucial test for a profession,' continued Mr Prentice. 'Through the GDC, the dental profession has risen to the challenge – at least, where private dental care is concerned. The NHS should take note and follow.'

Across the UK, most complaints have been about dentists, with a few about other dental professionals. Most complaints concerned solely private treatment, but a few were about mixed NHS/private treatment. Complaints that raise issues about patient safety and whether a practitioner should be allowed to continue practising continue to be dealt with by the GDC.

DIARY

FEBRUARY

Preparing for retirement

Date: 1 February 2008
Venue: Aldwark Manor Hotel, York
www.bda.org/events

Career opportunities in UK dentistry

Date: 8 February 2008
Venue: Hotel Russell, London
www.bda.org/events

FGDP(UK) Career Pathway Away Day 2008

Date: 15 February 2008
Venue: Birmingham City Hospital
Email: aschuele@rcseng.ac.uk
www.fgdp.org.uk/news/index_html?event_id=85

143rd Chicago Dental Society Midwinter Meeting

Date: 21-24 February 2008
Venue: McCormick Place Lakeside Center,
Chicago, USA
www.cds.org/mwm

NEW GUIDE FOR PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Readers concerned with dental education are invited to contribute their comments and suggestions on a new problem-based learning (PBL) document that has been published online.

Entitled *A whole system approach to problem-based learning in dental, medical and veterinary sciences – a guide to important variables*, the guide is aimed at designers or researchers of new or revised curricula and provides a set of principles and models for implementing a whole programme of PBL.

Problem-based learning sets out to enable students to be active learners by presenting them with real problems that they may have to deal with in their professional careers. Students work in small groups to explore the situation facing them, leading them to pose questions they wish to research in order to manage the problem.

The guide has been produced by a group of distinguished academic practitioners

from Australia and the UK lead by Professor Charles Engel, University of London, with funding from the Centre of Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning at the University of Manchester. According to Prof Engel, evidence-based practice calls for evidence-based education, and this evidence needs to be based on critical evaluation of the design and implementation of the curriculum. The guide addresses key issues that are often overlooked in writing on PBL and sets out to describe thirteen important variables, including recruitment and selection of students and the requisites for initiating and maintaining an innovative curriculum.

The guide can be found online at http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ceeb/resources/resourcepacks/pblsystemapproach_v1.pdf. Any comments or suggestions for improvement should be directed to Professor David Powis, Newcastle University, New South Wales, Australia, by email at david.powis@newcastle.edu.au.

NEW GUIDANCE ON CLINICAL TRIALS

The General Dental Council (GDC) has issued new guidance to all registrants who are associated with, undertaking or involved in clinical trials and research.

The guidance highlights the importance of putting patients' interests first, finding out about current best practice, laws and regulations, acting honestly and fairly and ensuring that patients are able to claim compensation.

It is the responsibility of anyone involved with dental research to be aware of any legislation relating to clinical trials and to seek approval from their local ethics committee where required. The guidance also stresses the importance of checking with your defence organisation before undertaking this kind of work.

Further information and advice is available from the 'Standards guidance' section of the GDC website at www.gdc-uk.org.

BSOI TO LAUNCH OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

The British Society of Oral Implantology (BSOI) will launch its official publication at the inaugural BSOI symposium in April this year. Published by Quintessence Publishing, the *European Journal of Oral Implantology* will focus on the science and practice of oral implantology and related areas, providing up-to-date, evidence-based information to help clinicians make the best decisions for their patients.

The Editor-in-Chief of the new publication will be Dr Marco Esposito, Senior Lecturer in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Director of the post-graduate dental specialties courses in dental implantology at the University of Manchester School of Dentistry. Dr Esposito is a specialist in periodontics with a particular interest in the assessment of the effectiveness of dental implants. He has authored over 80 peer reviewed papers and is also Associate



Professor of Biomaterials at the Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Göteborg, Sweden.