

Updated guidelines for lower third molar management



The Royal College of Surgeons of England Faculty of Dental Surgery Working Group has updated the 20-year-old guidelines for lower third molar surgery to give them a fresh approach to patient care.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for lower third molar surgery were originally published in 1999.

Parameters of care for patients undergoing mandibular third molar surgery has recently been published by the Faculty of Dental Surgery Clinical Standards Committee (Royal College of Surgeons of England).¹

Geoff Chiu (pictured) represented the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (BAOMS) on the Working Group.

Dr Chiu said: 'Over these 20 years we have been able to see the effects that NICE guidelines have had on the oral health of patients in the UK. The new guidelines take into account all the developments since the NICE guidelines were published. This includes management of "high risk" third molars, the current status of patients' social wellbeing and their involvement in the decision-making.'

Since 1999, there have been developments, advancements and research in: technology (cone beam CT scans); pharmacology (steroids and local anaesthetics); and outcomes in supreme court judgements (Lanarkshire vs Montgomery), all of which have changed the management of third molars.

The East Lancashire and Bolton NHS Trusts-based OMFS, Dr Chiu, said that retaining third molars in some patients has had a detrimental impact: 'This has led to patients developing latent caries or periodontal disease, which can often result in the loss of both the third and second molars.'

He is also concerned that many studies have shown the removal of third molars in older age can cause surgical morbidity that increases with age.

'The updated guidelines provide a fresh approach to the comprehensive management of third molars,' said Dr Chiu.

Reference

1. Royal College of Surgeons Faculty of Dental Surgery. Parameters of care for patients undergoing mandibular third molar surgery. 2020. Available at: <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/-/media/files/rcs/fds/guidelines/3rd-molar-guidelines--april-2021.pdf> (accessed April 2021).

DCPs advised to check their CPD hours

All dental care professionals (DCPs) have been advised to ensure they are on track to meet the minimum continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for maintaining General Dental Council (GDC) registration before the end of the CPD year on 31 July 2021. This includes the need to comply with the ten hours over two years rule and making an annual CPD statement.

The GDC's Enhanced CPD Scheme requires all dental professionals to complete a minimum of ten hours of verifiable CPD over each consecutive two-year period, including any two years that span more than one CPD cycle. This means in one year a dental professional could do no CPD activity, but in the following year, they would need to complete ten hours of CPD to meet the requirements.

This rule has been introduced to help ensure CPD is spread out over the full five-year cycle, and is the reason dental professionals are asked to make a CPD statement each year at annual renewal time.

Dental professionals must meet these requirements to maintain their GDC registration. The only exception is those who are new onto the register, so have not yet started a CPD cycle. Dental professionals

are advised to check the number of CPD hours they have logged last year on their eGDC account, and the number done so far this year, to ensure they are able to meet the minimum requirements.

If there is shortfall due to COVID-19, dental professionals are advised to do all that they can to be compliant by the end of the CPD year. However, if this proves not to be possible for reasons related to COVID-19, the GDC will take your exceptional circumstances into account. Dental professionals might also consider applying for a grace period if they need more time to complete their CPD, but this needs to be applied for in writing before the 31 July deadline.

Further guidance on CPD requirements and the rules of the Enhanced CPD scheme are available from the GDC website, which includes tools to help record and submit CPD (www.gdc-uk.org).

