

Dental news

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.

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DENTAL PROTECTION RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT BOTOX

Dental Protection has raised concerns about dentists carrying out botox procedures, following a General Dental Council statement on the situation.

In a statement issued last month, the GDC said that it considered cosmetic procedures such as botox were 'not the practice of dentistry'. The Council stated that 'While the use of such procedures in the immediate perioral area might be legitimate additions to dentistry, the Council takes the view that their use outside the perioral area would not.'

But, the GDC statement added, this need not mean that dentists already providing these treatments should no longer do so, rather that they should only 'advertise or publicise this separately to the practice of dentistry.' The GDC said: 'In providing these treatments registrants should not rely on their professional standing or title and patients should be informed that the treatment is not being provided in their capacity as dental professional.'

But Dental Protection, the professional indemnity body, has raised concerns about what it considers a lack of clarity in the GDC's position.

Kevin Lewis, dental director of Dental

Protection, said 'Dental Protection is very concerned regarding the lack of clarity and the potential for complaints, claims and legal challenges of the GDC's position.'

'With many practices having made these procedures a central part of their healthcare practice this "separation" may end up being totally artificial, difficult and costly to achieve and against the best interests of patients,' he added. 'If they [patients] know full well their chosen clinician is a dentist, what purpose does the requirement for "separation" achieve?' Mr Lewis said.

Dental protection indemnifies dentists for carrying out cosmetic procedures but believes these procedures carry additional risk. 'Many of these procedures present additional risks either because they are inherent in the procedures themselves, or because of a clinician's relative unfamiliarity with them compared to traditional procedures,' it noted in a statement in January 2008.

Patients presenting for these procedures might also constitute added risk, having extremely high expectations or body dysmorphic disorder, which the dentist might not recognise, the statement added.

Commenting on the GDC statement,



Robert Hoppenbrouwers, head of the Dental Defence Union, confirmed that members were still covered for cosmetic procedures. 'But we would urge dentists to exercise caution in the way they market and provide these treatments as it is not clear what might lead the GDC to take action against a registrant,' he said.

NUMBERS TAKING OUT DENTAL COVER ON THE INCREASE

The number of subscribers taking out dental benefit plans grew by 10% last year, up to total of 3,295,000, according to the latest report by market analysts Laing & Buisson. This follows a very strong year in 2006 when numbers increased by 31%.

Last year also saw a 17% increase in

the number of employers taking out dental insurance for their staff. The report, *Health care cover - UK market report 2008* said an estimated 3.4 million people were covered by dental plans, representing more than 5% of the population. Spending reached £514 million.

Philip Blackburn, author of the report,

said the buoyant market in 2005 and 2006 was due to many dentists shifting to the private sector before the introduction of the NHS contract in April 2006. 'Two years on this shift has settled down as Government funding for NHS dental care remains ring-fenced. However fewer people have access to NHS dental care post-contract and the increased popularity of dental insurance is set to grow.'

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DROPS PROPOSED LIMITS ON USE OF NHS LOGO

The Department of Health has dropped a proposal to limit use of the NHS logo to practices where two thirds of patients are NHS. This follows a consultation exercise and opposition from the British Dental Association.

In its consultation document *NHS identity scheme for dental practices*, published in October, the Department suggested the logo should only be used by practices where at least two thirds of patients received NHS services. The BDA opposed this proposal as 'inappropriate' and difficult to measure. It proposed that any practice holding an NHS contract should be allowed to advertise the fact.

The consultation document also suggested other requirements for the use of the logo, including opening hours of at least 35 hours a week and the provision of services for all types of patients – adults, children, fee-paying and charge exempt.

The Department has now dropped these requirements following 101 responses to the consultation from dentists, dental organisations and primary care trusts. In a statement published last month (July) it said: 'The ultimate aim is for all practices which provide NHS dentistry to allow patients to see at a glance where NHS services are offered.'

Restrictions on the use of the logo were 'felt to be inappropriate at a time

when the public are having difficulty identifying where services are available in some parts of the country,' according to the statement.

In a turnaround from the original position, the Department proposes that the NHS should make it a condition of tenders 'that providers advertise and promote their services by increased use of the NHS identity and greater prominence of the logo on stationery and signage.'

The Department's document *NHS identity scheme for dental practices. Response to the consultation* provides examples of this, suggesting the logo could appear on practice signs, stationery and practice leaflets.

ACADEMIC DENTISTRY FAILING TO RECRUIT, SAYS SURVEY

The number of clinical academics continues to decline despite considerable investment in dental schools, according to the latest survey from the Dental Schools Council.

Between nine and 11% of posts are vacant and ten of the UK's 16 dental schools report difficulties in recruiting, particularly in restorative dentistry. The survey, *Clinical academic staffing levels in UK dental schools as at July 2007*, showed 55% of academics are over 46 years of age.

'It is essential that sufficient numbers of dental graduates are attracted to clinical academic dentistry to replace those retiring,' the report said. It also points out that academic dentistry does not reflect the make up of the general dental workforce.

While 57% of dental students are women, they hold only 12% of professorships, fewer than in 2006, the survey found. 'There are twice as many male clinical academics than there are females, and this gender disparity becomes more pronounced the further up the clinical ladder. At professorial level females are outnumbered 8 to 1.' However the report added that it is 'hugely encouraging that 31% of dental deans are now women.'

FACE TRANSPLANT PIONEER TO SPEAK AT CONFERENCE

Bernard Devauchelle, the maxillofacial surgeon who carried out the world's first partial face transplant, will be speaking at the annual scientific meeting of the BDA's hospitals group in Cambridge next month.

Professor Devauchelle (below) carried out the successful operation on Isabelle Dinoire in Amiens, France, in November 2005 after she had been mauled by her dog. Ms Dinoire received the transplant from a brain dead donor. Her nose, chin and lips were replaced in the 17-hour operation led by Professor Devauchelle and his colleague Jean Michel Dubernard.

After the attack by the family labrador in May 2005 Ms Dinoire, then 38, could not speak or chew properly. One of her daughters said the dog had been trying to revive her after a suicide attempt, but

this was later denied by the surgeons.

Ms Dinoire told a press conference in February 2006 that in May 2005 she had taken some pills to forget a very distressing week and then fainted and fell on the floor. When she came round, she said, she tried to light a cigarette and could not understand why she could not hold it between her lips. Then she saw a pool of blood and the dog standing beside it, she said.

Following the operation, in which 20 muscles were transplanted, there were concerns about tissue rejection. Professor Devauchelle has said this occurred twice in December 2005, and January 2006, but both episodes were controlled by immunosuppressant drugs.

Two months after the operation Ms Dinoire, who was still smoking, said she could smile, laugh without pain, and express herself through her face. She hoped to go home and lead a normal life with her two daughters, she said.

On the first anniversary on the operation, Professor Devauchelle, of the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire in Amiens, said facial sensitivity had been restored and she was able to eat and drink without problems.

Other speakers at the conference, to be held at Magdalene College, on September 25 and 26, include James Partridge, founder of the charity Changing Faces. Mr Partridge OBE received 40 degree burns in a car accident when he was 18.



SKELETON EXHIBITION OPENS

Twenty-six skeletons from a huge collection archived by the Museum of London have gone on display at the Wellcome Collection. The exhibition, 'Skeletons: London's buried bones' lasts until September 28.

It includes the bones of a 22-week foetus, the youngest ever individual discovered on a British archaeological site, whose remains were found with its mother, and the skeleton of the Chelsea butcher William Wood, who died in 1842 at the age of 84.

Bill White, senior curator at the Museum of London Centre for Human Bioarchaeology, which has a collection of 17,000 skeletons, said they provided valuable information on diet and health. The skull pictured was that of a

woman aged 18-25 with syphilis, excavated from the site of Cross Bones in Southwark, a cemetery for paupers and prostitutes.

'She had quite a lot of calculus and hypoplasia of enamel, but only two decayed teeth as she would not have been able to afford sugar,' he said. The scarring on the skull is from ulcerated lesions caused by syphilis.

Mr White is in charge of the Wellcome Osteological Database which has detailed online data on 11,000 skeletons. The database allows dentists and other researchers to carry out virtual studies from their own desks. The database can be accessed at www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/Collections/OnlineResources/CHB/Database/

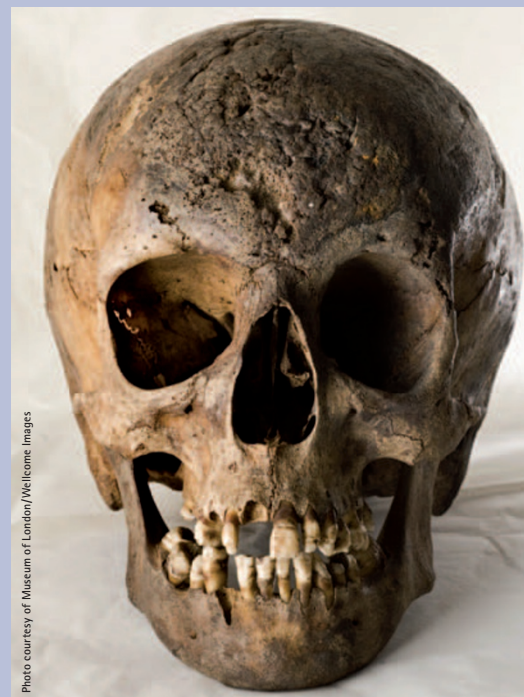


Photo courtesy of Museum of London/Wellcome Images

DENTISTRY FUNDING IN WALES TO BE RING-FENCED UNTIL 2012, MINISTER ANNOUNCES

Dental funding to local health boards in Wales will be ring-fenced until 'at least 2012', Welsh health minister Edwina Hart (below right) has announced.

Her announcement coincided with the publication last month of a review of the national dental contract by a task force established by the Welsh Assembly.

Chaired by Wayne Richards, Professor of Community Dental Practice at Glamorgan University, the review said the introduction of the contract had caused tensions with dentists, patients, local health boards and the Welsh Assembly. It called for ring-fenced funding to be extended beyond 2009 to achieve stability in the dental workforce.

'The Welsh Assembly government record on investing in NHS dentistry has been good at times but inconsistent in approach,' the review said, adding that 'It is essential to grow year on year allocations to ensure oral health/access aims are met.' The report also noted that 'the Unit of Dental Activity as a sole outcome measure is inadequate.'

On the overall effect of the contract, the report said: 'There are diverse views

within the profession. The balance is moving toward the view that the new system is a "workable system".'

'Local health boards are not finding difficulty attracting dentists or expanding services provided by established practitioners,' the review said, concluding that 'Even though the transition from old to new has been challenging for the profession, the two years that have elapsed have shown most dentists are supporters of the NHS.'



The report called for changes in legislation to allow dentists to charge patients who do not turn up for appointments, and 'clear national guidance' on termination and transfer of contracts.

Announcing the extension of ring-fenced funding until 2012, Edwina Hart said: 'Safeguarding dental resources within LHB dental budgets until at least 2012 sends an important message about protecting existing dental provision.' She added that a copy of the report would be sent to every dental practice in Wales and she would make a further statement in the autumn.

Stuart Geddes, BDA director for Wales said, 'The extension of ring-fencing to 2012 is a positive step that will bring much needed stability. The Welsh Assembly Government must now tackle the other problems identified, including the inadequacy of the UDA as a sole measure of dentists' activity.'

The news comes as SpaDental Management, a company based in Monmouth, Wales, which operates 12 joint venture dental practices, announced that it has acquired £17 million to expand its practice portfolio. It hopes to acquire 30 larger NHS and private practices in England and Wales.

DIARY

AUGUST

BDA Scottish scientific conference: the kinetics of aesthetics

Date: August 29 2008
Venue: Stirling University
Tel: 020 7563 4590
Email: events@bda.org

SEPTEMBER

Overview of current employment law and how to avoid pitfalls

Date: September 2 2008
Venue: Medical Biology Centre, 97 Lisburn Road, Belfast
Tel: 02890 682223

Association for Dental Education in Europe 34th Annual Meeting Career development in dental education

Date: September 3-5 2008
Venue: Zagreb University
www.adee2008.org

American Academy of Periodontology Annual Meeting

Date: September 6-9 2008
Venue: Seattle, Washington
Email: meg@perio.org

BDA seminar: Latest Developments in Aesthetic Dentistry

Speaker: Dr Pascal Magne
Date: September 12 2008
Venue: Hotel Russell, London
Tel: 020 7563 4591
Email: events@bda.org

Cases, communication, conversation, conjuring

Date: September 12 2008
Venue: Royal College of Surgeons, London
Tel: 020 7869 6760
Email: fgdp@rcseng.ac.uk

1st Congress of the European Society of Microscopic Dentistry

Date: September 18-20 2008
Venue: Hotel Krasnapolsky, Amsterdam
www.esmd2008.org

Infection Control for the Whole Dental Team

Date: September 18 2008
Venue: Charles Hastings Centre, Worcester-shire Royal Hospital
Tel: 0121 237 2834
Email: d.hammond@bham.ac.uk

Tales of the unexpected

Date: September 25 2008
Venue: Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh
Tel: 0131 5271621
Email: dental@rcsed.ac.uk

E-LEARNING PIONEER PROMOTED AT BIRMINGHAM

Deborah White, director of learning and teaching and head of public health at Birmingham Dental School, has been promoted to Associate Professor. This follows her development, with colleagues, of an innovative e-learning course which allows students to create their own content online and provides podcasts. The project won an award for outstanding ICT initiative in the Times Higher Education Supplement awards in November last year.

Professor White, who qualified at Manchester, has been at Birmingham University since 1999 and is involved in a project to develop CPD for women and part-time workers in dentistry.



DENTISTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND MAY LOSE EXEMPTION FROM JURY SERVICE

Dentists in Northern Ireland may lose their automatic exemption from jury service under a proposal from the Northern Ireland Courts Service.

In its document *Widening the jury pool*, which is the subject of consultation until September 4, the Northern Ireland Courts Service suggests that jurors should be drawn from a wider pool and that dentists, doctors, teachers, midwives, pharmacists and vets should lose their automatic exemption from having to serve on juries.

In 2007, the report points out, more than 10,000 of the 40,000 called for jury service in Northern Ireland claimed they fell into one of these ineligible categories. The aim of the proposals is to 'significantly reduce' the categories of

people who are ineligible and establish 'a robust system of discretionary deferral and excusal.'

Dentists in England and Wales have no automatic exemption from jury service.

Seamus Killough, chair of BDA Northern Ireland, said: 'This places the profession in a difficult position as it seeks to fulfil its obligation to patients. The proposed extension to require dentists to act as jurors could mean cancelled appointments or even the non-availability of a practitioner. Dentists have an obligation to place the interests of patients first.'

A copy of the document is available at www.courtsni.gov.uk. Comments should be sent to Cathy Scollan, consultation coordinator, at communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk.

WORK TO START ON TRURO DEVELOPMENT

Work is due to start this month on Peninsula Dental School's £11.5 million development in Truro, Cornwall.

The building, which has received funding from the European Convergence Programme, will house 32 dental chairs and four single surgeries. It will be open for students from 2010 and is

expected to provide treatment for 128 patients a day.

Peninsula, the UK's newest dental school, welcomed its first 64 students to its Plymouth premises in September. This cohort of students will transfer to the Truro premises when it opens in January 2010.