

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.

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

NEWS

YOUNG DENTIST CONFERENCE EXPLORES 'WORTH'

Recently qualified dentists at this year's Young Dentist Conference, organised by Dental Protection in association with the *BDJ* and the BDA, spent the day discussing concerns about their future within dentistry. Now an annual event, the conference was held last month at the Royal College of Physicians in London with over 250 delegates in attendance.

The day included presentations from, and a panel discussion with other young business people at a similar early stage in a variety of careers, as well as with fellow dentists.

The expert panel included Neal Raval, a newly qualified dentist now working in Germany, Saaqib Ali, winner of the Young Dentist of the Year Award, and James Hamill, a Northern Irish dentist with an award-winning practice.

James and Saaqib addressed the young dentists' concerns about setting up in practice in the current economic and political climate. Both delivered advice to the delegates based on their own business models, suggesting that making a practice 'stand out' from others nearby would improve its chances of success.

Neal advised the young dentists on how to calculate the appropriate fees for services rendered – an area many young dentists feel uncomfortable discussing. He was confident that so long as a dentist is 'consistent, predictable and successful' when carrying out a procedure, and continues to build upon his or her professional education, they should not be embarrassed in charging a rate which reflects their knowledge and experience.

A young lawyer and young entrepreneur were on hand to amplify the points

raised on fee charging, adding that any young professional feels a similar apprehension towards dealing with the issue of money and that having confidence in your skills and a knowledge of the 'value' of the service to the patient will help.

Finally, three young dentists in different areas of specialism – endodontics, periodontics and orthodontics – acted as advocates for their chosen speciality in open debate to save it from being sent to 'Surgery 101', a take on the popular TV show, *Room 101*. Following the lively debate, chaired by the *BDJ* Editor-in-Chief, the delegates chose to send orthodontics to Surgery 101, preferring to save the preventative attributes of endo and perio.



FLUORIDE TO BE ADDED TO SOUTHAMPTON'S WATER SUPPLY

Fluoride is to be added to the Southampton and South Hampshire water supply after a three month consultation by Southampton City Primary Care Trust (PCT).

Members of the South Central Strategic Health Authority (SHA) Board, comprising Executive and Non-executive Directors, voted unanimously in favour of the proposal to increase the level of fluoride in the local water supply from 0.08 parts per million to 1 ppm – the optimal level for tackling tooth decay. Using powers under the Water Act 2003 they will demand water companies add the chemical by around 2010.

Five-year-old children from Southampton have over twice as many teeth affected by decay as those from South Birmingham and around three times more than those from South Staffordshire, where the water is fluoridated.

Jim Easton, Chief Executive of South Central SHA said, 'The Board was satisfied that, based on existing research, water fluoridation is a safe and effective way to improve dental health. It is something which has been added to the water supply in parts of the UK including Birmingham for many years, and despite the best public health monitoring available no significant health problems have been identified.'

The British Dental Association welcomed the decision as it believes that fluoridation will play an important role in reducing the high levels of dental decay in the area. BDA Scientific Adviser Professor Damien Walmsley commented, 'The significance of today's decision is not confined to the 193,000 people it will affect directly. Other SHAs in England have been waiting to see whether South Central – as the first SHA to consult on fluoridation since the law changed in 2003 – would succeed, before launching their own consultations.'



RESEARCH FINDS NO CHANGE TO PREGNANCY OUTCOMES

Treating gum disease does not decrease a woman's risk of preterm birth, according to a recent study. The research, overseen by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Dentistry, looked at 1,800 pregnant women with periodontal disease. The women were randomly assigned to two groups, one of which received periodontal treatment before 23 weeks gestation, while the other received no treatment. Overall, the two groups showed no significant differences in obstetric or neonatal outcomes.

Dr Amy Murtha, Director of Obstetrics research at Duke University Medical Center, one of the medical schools participating in the study, said that the biggest implication of the research was that this level of standard periodontal care would not affect the birth outcome.

She added, 'That's not to say pregnant women should not get dental exams and treatment as needed; they should. Our study emphasises that treating



periodontal disease during pregnancy is safe, but that standard periodontal care is not enough to reduce the risk of preterm birth.' She suggested that preterm birth and gum disease may share a com-

mon underlying trait, such as an exaggerated inflammatory response.

The study was presented at the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine annual meeting, in San Diego.

DIARY

APRIL

Dental Sedation Teachers Group Annual Symposium 2009

Date: 24-25 April 2009
Venue: Bristol Royal Infirmary Education Centre
www.dstg.co.uk

8th Congress of the International Society of Breath Odor Research

Date: 26-28 April 2009
Venue: Dortmund, Germany
www.isbor.net

MAY

ADI Biennial Implant Team Congress

Venue: ICC Birmingham
Date: 7-9 May 2009
www.adi.org.uk

Materials in Dentistry

Date: 8 May 2009
Venue: Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, London
Email: dawn.bonfield@iom3.org
www.iom3.org/events/dentistry

Clinical Innovations Conference and Annenberg Lecture

Date: 15-16 May 2009
Venue: Royal College of Physicians, London
Tel: 020 7400 8989
Email: info@smile-on.com
www.smile-on.com

DEATH NOTICE

Dental practitioner Miss Gillian Rosalind Mack died in December 2008. Gillian came from a distinguished dental family and inherited her father's dental practice in Ealing.

She studied dental surgery at The Royal Dental Hospital from 1958-1963. During that time she was elected Secretary of the Student's Society on two consecutive years. She was for some years Secretary of the Middlesex and Hertfordshire Branch of the BDA. Her father was the first secretary and started the branch in the immediate post-war years. Gillian was a keen horsewoman and played polo in her early years and will be sadly missed by friends and colleagues.

GROUP TO HIGHLIGHT DENTISTRY ISSUES

An all-party parliamentary group (APPG) for dentistry has been launched. Headed by Professor Jimmy Steele, who was chosen by the Department of Health to lead the independent review of NHS dentistry in England, each of the all-party group's activities will help it achieve its aim of acting as a focus for dental and oral health issues, raising the profile of dentistry and highlighting the views of patients and practitioners.

Professor Steele addressed a gathering of MPs, Peers and dental stakeholders, outlining the remit of the review he is leading and the progress he has made so

far. The meeting, led by the Chair of the APPG for dentistry, Labour MP for Staffordshire Moorlands Charlotte Atkins, was the first in a programme of events and visits that are planned to take place in 2009.

The British Dental Association was elected as Secretariat to the group. Chair of the BDA Executive Board Susie Sanderson said that group would act as a focus for dental issues at Westminster and help to further understanding among Parliamentarians of the importance of good oral health and suitable provision of dental care.



Back row from left: Sir Paul Beresford (Secretary – Conservative, Mole Valley) and Dr Doug Naysmith (Vice Chair – Labour, Bristol North West). Front row from left: Sandra Gidley (Vice Chair – Liberal Democrat, Romsey), Charlotte Atkins (Chair – Labour, Staffordshire Moorlands), and Lord Lea of Crondall (Vice Chair – Labour Peer)

NEW BREAKTHROUGH IN LAB GROWN TEETH

Scientists believe they have found a way to grow teeth in the laboratory. The team have located the gene responsible for the growth of enamel, which cannot grow back naturally, and suggest that their discovery could put an end to fillings and dentures.

Using experiments in mice, the work at Oregon State University has found that the gene, a 'transcription factor' called Ctip2, has several functions involving immune responses and the development of skin and nerves. The team made the link with enamel by studying mice bred to lack Ctip2. The

scientists found that Ctip2 was crucial for the enamel-producing cells, ameloblasts, to form and work properly. Other scientists are already growing the inner parts of teeth in animals - but they have no hard enamel coatings.

Dr Chrissa Kioussi, lead researcher said, 'Controlling the gene in conjunction with stem-cell technology could make the artificial creation of functional teeth a real possibility, or the knowledge could be used to strengthen existing enamel and repair damaged enamel, cutting decay and the need for fillings.'

NEW MOBILE DENTAL SERVICE LAUNCHED

A new mobile healthcare service has been launched by EMS Healthcare, offering short or long-term hire of a state-of-the-art fleet of medical vehicles capable of hosting mobile, community-based dental services.

The new service is primarily aimed at the NHS market and could be used to help PCTs improve access to dental care by taking services on the road, which could be beneficial in rural areas and when targeting hard-to-reach groups such as the homeless.

Keith Austin, Managing Director of EMS Healthcare, said 'In the last year we have seen a marked increase in demand from PCTs for our specialised mobile health promotion campaigns. This led to requests for mobile healthcare service delivery – for example, immunisation and screening programmes – and we realised there was an opportunity to provide a dedicated service to meet this growing need.'



He added that the service, applicable to both NHS and private practices, could include fast-response temporary accommodation following fire, flood or during a refurbishment programme, a temporary location to handle registra-

tions ahead of the opening of a new dental service in a new area, or a high-profile health promotion resource to communicate oral hygiene messages and/or to raise awareness of changes in local dental care provision.

PILOT PROJECT LAUNCHED

A new project inspired by Scotland's 'Childsmile', using flexibilities in the dental contract has been launched. The project aims to increase access to dental services for families in Skelmersdale.

Skelmersdale Smiles is a pilot project which is currently being delivered through a partnership between NHS Central Lancashire and a local NHS dental practice, and will mean

that every child born in Skelmersdale and their siblings will be offered NHS dentistry.

Patients attending the Skelmersdale Smiles practice will receive risk-based, age-specific preventive care delivered in accordance with the Department of Health's 'Delivering Better Oral Health' toolkit. The project will be robustly evaluated and extended within Cumbria and Lancashire.

NHS REPORT FINDS FLUCTUATING FIGURES

Findings from the report *NHS dental statistics for England, quarter 2: 30 September 2008* show that the proportion of people seeing an NHS dentist in England has risen slightly for the first time in two years.

The figures from The NHS Information Centre show that NHS dentists saw 52.9% (27.0 million) of the population in the 24 month period ending 30 September 2008. This compares to 52.7% (26.9 million) seen in the previous 24 month period ending 30 June 2008.

However, the number of patients seen is still 3.9% (1.1 million) less than the number seen in the 24 month period ending 31 March 2006, immediately before the new dental contractual arrangements began. A higher proportion of the population was seen in the north of England compared to the south.



From left to right: Melanie Catleugh (Consultant in Dental Public Health, NHS Central Lancashire), Janice Nicholson (Head of Dental Commissioning, NHS Central Lancashire), Stephen Bass (Dental Provider, Firbeck Dental Practice), Barry Cockcroft (Chief Dental Officer, Department of Health), Dr Stephen Ward (Medical Director, NHS Central Lancashire)