Other journals in brief

A selection of abstracts of clinically relevant papers from other journals.

The abstracts on this page have been chosen and edited by John R. Radford.

PROSTHETIC JOINT INFECTIONS (PJIs)

Dental procedures and subsequent prosthetic joint infections: findings from the Medicare current beneficiary survey

Skaar DD, O'Connor H *et al.* *J Am Dent Assoc* 2011; **142**: 1343–1351

The 2009 American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Information Statement advised that those with a prosthetic joint should receive antibiotic prophylaxis before invasive dental treatment. The authors of this paper argue that this guidance should be reconsidered.

This retrospective study analysed administrative data gathered over a 10-year period, using 1) time-to-event analysis (if a dental procedure that was carried out in the preceding 90- or 180-day periods was associated with a PJI) and 2) nested case-control analysis. In the time-to-event analysis, those who had received a dental procedure were marginally less likely (not significant) to have suffered a PJI than those who had not had dental treatment. In the other arm of the study, there was no significant difference between the percentage of patients who had suffered from a PJI, regardless as to whether or not they had had 'more dental visits' (1.5% *versus* 2.0%: not significant).

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2012.261

CHOICE – FLU VACCINATION

Effectiveness of seasonal influenza vaccination in healthcare workers: a systematic review

Ng ANM, Lai CKY *et al.* *J Hosp Infect* 2011; **79**: 279–286

For healthcare workers (HCWs) only, there is no evidence for or against annual vaccination against influenza.

Nonmaleficence is at the heart of healthcare, yet the coverage of annual influenza vaccination in HCWs remains low. What is the evidence then, for the efficacy of this preventative measure in HCWs? Over five thousand studies were identified of which only three randomised controlled trials met the investigators' inclusion criteria. It was conceded there could be publication bias. All three trials used the trivalent inactivated parenteral seasonal influenza vaccine. There was no evidence that vaccinations reduced the incidence of influenza or amount of sick leave for HCWs. This was surprising as seasonal influenza vaccination has been shown to be effective in two large-scale trials involving other healthy adults. No significant adverse reactions were documented although mild and transitory pain, and erythema was reported at the injection site.

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SO VERY DISTRESSING

Gagging during impression making: techniques for reduction

Farrier S, Pretty IA *et al.* *Dent Update* 2011; **38**: 171–176

Empowering the patient.

This paper does not discuss the use of hypnosis, sedation and acupuncture to manage gagging although acupressure is described. This involves thumb pressure, for up to 20 minutes, against, for example, the P-6 Nei-Kuan (wrist) or Chengjiang (REN-24) cave (mentolabial groove). Techniques using systematic desensitisation include 1) an imaginary light switch that the patient can switch off, and so learn to switch off their gagging and 2) the 'Marble Technique', despite associated risks with swallowing the marbles. Tried and tested methods are described such as asking the patient to raise their leg until exhaustion and the controlled breathing component of the Relax, Stretch and Breathe as endorsed by NCT. Then there is the 'sick stick' method of distraction that invites the patient to focus on an engraved polished broom handle. Reservations were expressed with approaches such as injecting alcohol distal to the lesser palatine foramen or putting salt on the tongue.

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2012.263

DECISION MAKING: CARE-FOCUSED FEMINISM

Does a clinician's sex influence treatment decisions?

Zitzmann NU, Zemp E *et al.* *Int J Prosthodont* 2011; **24**: 507–514

Irrespective of gender, 'Participants favored sinus grafting more often for their spouses than themselves (P = 0.022)'

Male surgeons more often advise a mastectomy in contrast to female surgeons who recommend breast-conserving surgery. There is no dispute that the impact from dental treatment is trivial when compared with ablative therapies of the breast. The key research aim of this study was to look for gender differences when managing periodontally involved maxillary molar teeth. A little over one third of those invited, answered a questionnaire. Gender did not influence treatment recommendations. Nevertheless male dentists reported that they carried out significantly more invasive treatment, such as implant placement including sinus grafting, compared with women colleagues. With an increasing number of women entering the health professions, the investigators referred to a 'feminization shift' with 'female practitioners more likely to use a more humanistic and patient-centered approach.'

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