

BLUE LIP SELFIES RAISE AWARENESS OF MOUTH CANCER



Ben Atkins, James Mehta and Professor Elizabeth Kay sporting blue lips at the launch of Mouth Cancer Action Month

This November is Mouth Cancer Action Month, and to raise awareness this year, MPs, dental professionals and the general public have been encouraged to don a pair of blue lips and take a 'blue lip selfie'.

Oral health charity the British Dental Health Foundation launched the campaign at the House of Commons on 28 October to continue the fight against a disease that has increased by 50% in the last decade alone.

Chief Executive of the Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter OBE, said: 'The blue lip selfies are a really good way of getting people interested in what the campaign is about. The reality is we are facing more cases and more deaths from mouth cancer than ever before, and we need the help of the profession to curb these statistics'.

The Foundation believes that if people are aware of changes

in their mouth, and in particular ulcers that do not heal within three weeks, lumps or swellings and red and white patches in the mouth, they are in a better position to act quickly.

Mouth cancer sufferer Jacky Merrison spoke at the event, along with Emma Riley, a former oral health practitioner for the Pennine Trust, and representatives from campaign sponsors and supporters.

Sponsor Denplan has launched a special Facebook app at www.bluelipselfie.co.uk for the campaign where users can customise selfies with blue cartoon lips and share them on the gallery. Selfies can also be shared on social media using the hashtag #bluelipselfie to help raise awareness of the disease.

More information on the campaign can be found at www.mouth-cancer.org.

'PRESCRIBING RIGHTS UNFAIR ON DENTAL THERAPISTS'

New president of the British Association of Therapists (BADT), Fiona Sandom, is pledging to work towards changing the 'unfair' status quo on prescribing rights for dental therapists.

It comes as physiotherapists were granted powers to prescribe [a restricted list of] medicines under new laws coming into force in Wales, Ms Sandom's home country.

The change – also applying to chiropractors and podiatrists – is aimed at easing the pressure on

these areas of the NHS. Nurses, pharmacists and optometrists can already prescribe certain medicines, with powers now extended to additional groups of health professionals, subject to training.

Ms Sandom explained: 'It's unfair and hampers our work greatly, since we are unable to carry out the full scope of our practice and whilst some of our places of work have Patient Group Directions (PGDs) in place, they are still extremely limiting.'

ARF HIKE

#ARFHIKE:
EVENTS UNFOLD

23 October 2014

ARF decision due

The General Dental Council (GDC) announces that it will make a decision on the Annual Retention Fee (ARF) level for 2015 on 30 October 2014. The decision will follow careful analysis of more than 4,000 responses to a consultation that ran for nine weeks until 4 September 2014.

At the meeting on 30 October, the Council will be asked to consider options for the level of ARF based on three financial models (Table 1).

Model	Reserves December 2015, expressed as months of 2015 budgeted operating spend		Resultant
	Most likely	Likely worse case	
Model 1	3.8 months	3.0 months	Dentists £945 DCPs £128
Model 2	3.0 months	2.2 months	Dentists £890 DCPs £116
Model 3	2.5 months	1.7 months	Dentists £850 DCPs £111
Current ARF	Less than zero	Less than zero	Dentists £576 DCPs £120

Table 1 ARF financial models

29 October 2014

The British Dental Association (BDA) says that it has called on the GDC to reject all three proposed options for a rise in the ARF ahead of its meeting on 30 October. The BDA outlines six reasons for members to vote against the three tabled proposals, arguing that the GDC has repeatedly altered the methodology and justification for its proposals (the six reasons to vote against can be found on the BDA website: <http://www.bda.org>).

The BDA says the GDC has painted an alarmist and inaccurate picture of rapidly accelerating complaint levels, and that the options facing Council members are focusing entirely on the cash held by the regulator's reserves – options that did not feature in the consultation.

30 October 2014

09:42

Judicial review granted

The BDA announces that its application for 'rolled-up' judicial review proceedings against the GDC has been granted. The review is confirmed to take place at some point between 1-16 December 2014. These fast-tracked proceedings should enable resolution of the case before dentists are legally required to pay their professional fees on 31 December 2014.

10:23

The British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy calls on the GDC to reconsider the proposed ARF for the good of the profession. It believes that although the proposed ARF increase is not significant for dental hygienists and therapists, it will have a knock-on effect. The BSDHT supports its dentist colleagues and says that the profession as a whole should not have to pay for the GDC's inadequacies in the *Fitness to practise* process.

16:40**ARF announcement**

The GDC announces that it is increasing its ARF from £576 to £890 for dentists and decreasing the fee for dental care professionals (DCPs) from £120 to £116. In June, the GDC proposed that the fee for dentists would increase to £945, and that the fee for DCPs would increase to £128.

The new fees must be paid by dentists by 31 December 2014 and by DCPs by 31 July 2015.

17:13

In response to the GDC's announcement that it is to press ahead with a 55% rise in its ARF for dentists, the BDA says that it will see the GDC in court.

31 October 2014

The alliance of Local Dental Committees (LDCs) says that it will hold a special national conference on 5 December 2014 to voice their lack of confidence in the GDC. Seventy-three LDCs in the UK oppose the ARF rise and consider the GDC to be out of touch and putting access to dental services at risk.

The British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN) welcomes the GDC's decision to set a lower ARF of £116 for dental nurses, but says that the fee is still too high in comparison to dental nurse salaries, especially for those who work part time.

The BADN strongly believes that the ARF for dental nurses should be considerably lower than that for hygienists and therapists, and that there should be a reduced ARF for all registrants who work part time.

NICE PUBLISHES NEW GUIDELINE TO IMPROVE COMMUNITIES' ORAL HEALTH

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published a new guideline on 22 October 2014 calling on local authorities to improve the oral health of their communities through better advice and support in oral hygiene.

Oral health: approaches for local authorities and their partners to improve the oral health of their communities states that local authorities should consider supervised toothbrushing and fluoride varnishing schemes for areas where children are at high risk of poor oral health. It says that groups responsible for an oral health needs assessment and strategy should develop an oral health strategy based on a needs assessment; that public service environments should promote oral health and information and advice on oral health should be included in all local health and wellbeing policies; that oral health should be promoted in the workplace; and that local authorities and other commissioners should be included in all local health and wellbeing policies.

Professor Mike Kelly, Director of the Centre for Public Health at NICE, said: 'We know from Public Health England that there are wide regional differences in oral health. The situation is bleak for many adults as well as children in disadvantaged areas. Diet, poor oral hygiene, smoking, alcohol, and a lack of understanding about oral health are causing tooth decay, gum disease, tooth loss and increasing the risk of mouth cancers. These are also the risk factors

causing many chronic conditions, including heart disease and diabetes.'

The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) warmly welcomed the new guideline which they say reflects a new mindset and meets many of their own recommendations for improving dental health in children.

Claire Stevens, spokesperson for BSPD, said: 'If implemented, the guideline means that instead of an annual spend of more than £30 million on hospital admissions of children for multiple extractions, we could be investing in a wide-reaching prevention approach.

'However, we would like reassurance that the guideline will translate into local authorities taking action.'

The BSPD also questioned why fluoridation had been excluded from the scope of the guideline.

The guideline can be viewed at <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph55>.

WILL YOU TAKE THE LONGITUDE CHALLENGE?

Do you have an idea that will solve the problem of antimicrobial resistance? The 2014 Longitude Prize is offering a prize fund of £10 million to solve the 'antibiotics challenge'.

The Prize is timed to mark the 300th anniversary of the original Longitude Prize, which saw watchmaker and carpenter John Harrison win a fortune from the British Government for devising the first seafaring clock that allowed people to pinpoint their exact position at sea. It was the very first challenge prize of its kind, led to safer sea travel and also opened up global trade.

The challenge for the 2014 Longitude Prize is to create a cost-effective, accurate, rapid and easy-to-use test for bacterial infections that will allow health professionals worldwide to administer the right antibiotics at the right time. It is believed that such a test would help to combat the rise of antimicrobial resistance. As frequently discussed in

this Journal, antimicrobial resistance poses a significant future risk as common infections become untreatable.

Submissions opened on 18 November and entrants will have up to five years to put their

solution forward for assessment by the Longitude Committee. To find out more or to register your interest, visit <http://www.longitudeprize.org/got-idea>.

18 November 2014 was *European Antibiotic Awareness Day*. In support of the event, the *FGDP(UK)* has made the entire text of *Antimicrobial prescribing for general dental practitioners* freely available to view on www.fgdp.org.uk until the end of November 2014: <http://www.fgdp.org.uk/publications/antimicrobial-prescribing-standards.ashx>.

