COMMENT

Letters to the editor

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OMFS

Seven day services

Sir, our department has recently audited the 'seven day service' provision for the acute surgical OMFS cases that we currently deliver. We believe this highlights the important contribution that junior (dental) core trainees make in providing 'round the clock' care.

For this, we defined the 'week' as commencing from 8 am Monday until 8 pm Friday, and 'weekend' as 8 pm Friday until 8 am Monday.

For all acute OMFS patients admitted through the Accident and Emergency department during the 'week' compared with the 'weekend', there was no significant statistical difference with 'time to treat', ie from time of A&E attendance to operation time in theatre.

This was shown in the 102 consecutive clinical cases studied, requiring admission and acute surgical care. Those cases admitted at the 'weekend' requiring treatment were on average treated 2 hours 19 minutes faster than during the week in cases for acute fractures of the mandible. This is also reflected in those patients with cervicofacial infections as noted (Fig. 1).

We believe this highlights the importance of a dedicated OMFS team comprising of junior OMFS doctors, middle grades and consultants alike. Our department is in a large teaching hospital, and it is only with the valued contribution from our junior (dental) core trainees that this vital 24/7 service provision can occur.

We would suggest that this also provides considerable clinical experience 'out of office hours' which should be remembered in any discussions related to future training and education of our core trainees.

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Fig. 1 Mean time from A&E attendance to theatre for cases for incision and drainage

Brexit

Implications for tooth whitening

Sir, we are writing with regard to Brexit and the implications on clinical dentistry. One piece of legislation of particular interest to paediatric dentistry is the EU Cosmetic Directive 2011/84/EU¹ which came into force in the UK in October 2012 and banned the use of products containing >0.1% hydrogen peroxide on persons under 18 years old. Dentists see children with dental anomalies including discoloured teeth; such anomalies have been reported to affect children's psychosocial health;² tooth whitening in such children and young people is not simply for cosmetic purposes. After much lobbying by UK dentists, including the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry, the General Dental Council amended its guidance and advised that products with ≤6% hydrogen peroxide can be used if 'intended wholly for the purpose of treating or preventing disease'.³

However, the ethical and legal conundrums for the dentist remain. The EU Cosmetic Directive has not changed despite the GDC's statement. The dentist who acts in a child's best interest might still

be at risk of legal persecution by the local Trading Standards officers. The maximum penalty of breaching the law is six months imprisonment.

In addition, interpretations of the GDC's guidance have been different. While one major UK defence organisation is supportive of a dentist's decision to provide tooth whitening for those under 18 years of age based on individual assessment,⁴ another UK defence organisation stated that they 'cannot envisage any circumstance where the product could be used 'wholly for the purpose of treating or preventing disease'.⁵

Therefore, the dental profession should continue to lobby to ensure that the legislation permits dental professionals to do what is best for their patients without ambiguity.

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1. EU. COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2011/84/EU 2011. Available at: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:283:0036:0038:en:PDF> (accessed 4 June 2016).
2. Al-Bitar Z B, Al-Omari I K, Sonbol H N, Al-Ahmad H T, Cunningham S J. Bullying among Jordanian schoolchildren, its effects on school performance, and the contribution of general physical and dentofacial features. *Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop* 2013; **144**: 872–878.
3. General Dental Council. GDC Position Statement on Tooth Whitening. 2014. Available at: <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Membersofpublic/Illegalpractice/Documents/Position%20Statement%20on%20Tooth%20Whiten->