DENTAL TRIBUNE

The World's Dental Newspaper · United Kingdom Edition

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News in Brief

Cleaning gadgets
The *Gadget Show* recently tested the latest electrical tooth cleaning gadgets the current market. Tested under the supervision of Dr Uchenna Okoye, the dentist who creates teeth transformations on TV programme *10 Years Younger*, presenter Suzi Perry tested the toothbrushes to see what ones were the best. The Panasonic Dentacare Travel Irrigator came in fifth, followed by the Colgate 360 Microsonic Power in fourth. In third place was the Phillips Sonicare Flexcare with Sanitiser, which was praised for the sanitizer, that kills bacteria on the toothbrush head by using a UV light. Oral-B took the top two places, with the Oral-B Professional Care 8500 in second place and the Oral-B Triumph with Smart Guide taking first place. Dr Uchenna Okoye praised the effectiveness of the Oral-B 5000 and made it her top recommendation.

The secret of enamel
Researchers from the Forsyth Institute and the universities of Pittsburgh and Michigan in the US have reported that they have documented the process in which enamel, one of the hardest tissues in the human body, is created. In their research the scientists discovered that the protein amelogenin, which makes up to 20 and 30 per cent of early enamel, arranges itself into clusters. According to one report, these clusters then stabilise and organise calcium phosphate crystals in parallel arrays and fuse them together, resulting in needle shaped particles. Although the scientists added that more research is needed to be carried out, they believe that their observations could be used to aid in the development of new medical and dental materials.

3D goes Russian
3D Diagnostic Imaging has selected a distributor for its CarieScan technology in Russia. The company which makes the CarieScan Pro, a handheld device which is used to detect tooth decay, has chosen Russian distributor IT Stom, which operates in Moscow, according to reports. Further reports have also stated that to distribute its caries support system throughout the USA, 3D Diagnostic Imaging have signed an agreement with American company Henry Schein Inc.

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College appoints Dean
Dr Rekow is set to join King's

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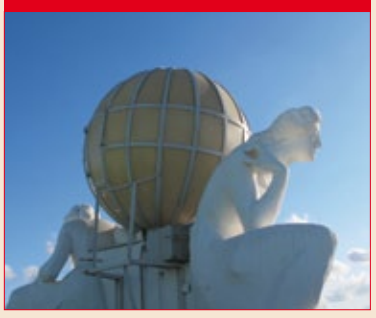

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Ups and downs of NHS Dentistry 2010/11

New reporting gives clarity to NHS dentistry usage

The *NHS Dental Statistics for England: 2010/11* has recently been released by the NHS Information Centre.

This year the paper has progressed into a comprehensive report bringing together a range of information, such as the number of dentists working for the NHS, the amount of treatments that are carried out and the number of patients that are seen by an NHS dentist. One interesting fact showed that 43.5 per cent of NHS dentists are female.

There was however a key finding to the report, which revealed that the number of fluoride treatments had substantially increased since 2009/10 for both adults and children; 8.1 per cent of all child treatments included a fluoride varnish, while 1.2 per cent of all adult treatments included a fluoride varnish.

The figures also revealed that since 2006 an extra one million patients have been seen by an NHS dentist, putting the final figure for the two-year period, ending in June 2011, at more than 29 million. Alongside these figures, in the past 24 months around 56.3 per cent of the population have received dental care. Even though these figures are promising, the report also revealed that over the same period 26,000 fewer children had seen an NHS dentist.

Commenting on this figure, Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter said: "It is disappointing to see the number of children visiting an NHS dentist has failed to grow over the past five years. Children should be attending the dentist as soon as possible in order for them to develop good oral health habits which they can carry through to adulthood.

The report also highlighted the 2.2 million cases of complex treatment, such as bridgework and dentures, which were carried out in 2010/11.

The report stated that 1.2 million of these complex cases had been carried out on non-paying patients; however, it was also clarified that out of the 39.2 million course of dental treatment in 2010/11, only 9.0 million were carried out on non-paying adults.

According to NHS Dental Statistics for England: 2010/11, one reason for this may be a lower standard of dental health among non-paying adults.

Dr Carter said: "Although the figure still equates to more than every other person in England having access to an NHS dentist, it is the view of the Foundation that more needs to be done to break down the barriers for everyone. With rising household budgets it is important that people don't view their dental health as a luxury - it is one you most certainly cannot afford to take for granted."

John Milne, Chair of the British Dental Association's General Dental Practice Committee, said: "The increasing number of patients who can access care is good news for those that it benefits, although the regional variations in the proportions of the population accessing care, and fact that the percentage of children doing so remains below the March 2006 baseline, serve as reminders that there is no room for complacency about the overall improvement.

"A new dental contract and commissioning arrangements for England are now being developed that should benefit dentists and their patients by creating a more prevention-oriented, quality-focused approach. Piloting for these arrangements is now beginning and it will be important that the Government maintains a constructive dialogue with profession as they are taken forward." DT

King's College London appoints new dental Dean

Dr Dianne Rekow

Dr Dianne Rekow, Senior Vice Provost of Engineering and Technology at New York University (NYU) and Provost of Polytechnic Institute of NYU, has been appointed as the next Dean of the Dental Institute at King's College London.

She will succeed Professor Nairn Wilson, who is due to retire at the end of this year, and will take up the position from 1 January 2012.

Dr Rekow is president of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) and is an internationally known authority on the performance of new materials and products for use in aesthetic and restorative dentistry. Dr Rekow's team has also carried out research into the use of bioengineered tissue to facilitate the growth of replacement bone in people who have been disfigured by disease.

Principal of King's, Professor Sir Rick Trainor, said: "Dr Rekow is an internationally renowned, highly regarded expert in her field with substantial experience of successful academic leadership in dentistry and beyond. I am delighted to welcome her to King's Dental Institute as it enters the next phase of development as a world class dental clinical academic centre.

"With her unparalleled knowledge and expertise, Dr Rekow will help drive the Dental Institute forward to realise its full potential across the spectrum of innovative clinical practice, learning and teaching and ground-breaking oral and dental research.

"This year the Dental Institute was ranked in first position in two of the UK's higher education league tables - *The Guardian* and *The Complete University Guide*. I would like to pay tribute to Professor Nairn Wilson's role in achieving this during his many years of dedicated service to King's, and under whose leadership and vision the Dental Institute has gone from strength to strength."

Commenting on her appointment, Dr Rekow said: "King's well-earned outstanding reputation is an incredibly valuable asset for a new dean, creating an exceptionally strong base from which to mitigate emerging challenges and realise future opportunities. I look forward to working with the staff and students in the Dental Institute, the College, the associated Trusts, and the dental profession as the Institute continues its evolution to increasingly greater distinction." DT

Could future cavities be prevented?

A recent study by the University of Illinois has confirmed that the bacteria associated with early childhood caries (ECC) has been found in infant saliva.

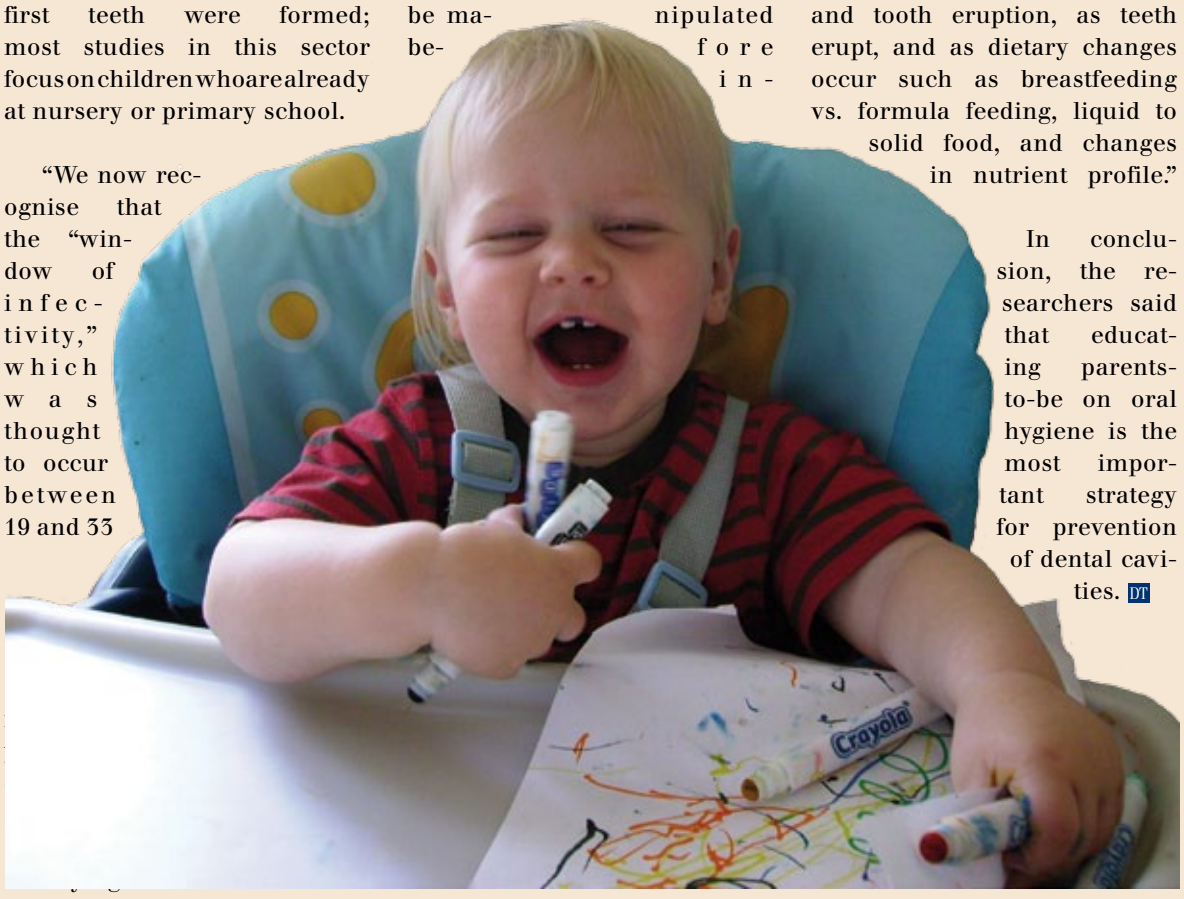
The study, led by researcher Kelly Swanson, focused on infantsbefore their first teeth were formed; most studies in this sector focuson childrenwhoarealready at nursery or primary school.

"We now recognise that the "window of infectivity," which was thought to occur between 19 and 33

Throughout the study the team were able to characterise communities of bacteria and learned that oral bacterial communities in infants were much morediverse than originally expected.

Talking on whether these bacterial communities could be manipulated before infants got their teeth to help prevent disease in the future, Kelly was quoted saying: "The soft tissues in the mouth appear to serve as reservoirs for potential pathogens prior to tooth eruption," Kellywas quoted. "We want to characterise the microbial evolution that occurs in the oral cavity between birth and tooth eruption, as teeth erupt, and as dietary changes occur such as breastfeeding vs. formula feeding, liquid to solid food, and changes in nutrient profile."

In conclusion, the researchers said that educating parents-to-be on oral hygiene is the most important strategy for prevention of dental cavities. DT



Eastman students gain prominent research grants

(From left to right) Fiona Ryan and Shari Daniels

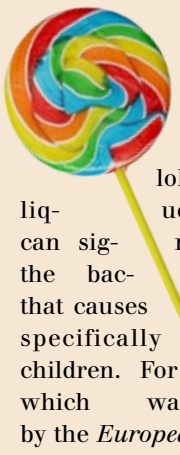
UCL Eastman PhD students Shari Daniels and Fiona Ryan have both been awarded prestigious research grants by the European Orthodontic Society (EOS) to aid in their impressive research in the field.

Fiona is currently undertaking the final year of her PhD and she and her supervisor Professor Susan Cunningham have been awarded £16,320 to fund a national research project to investigate certain psychological characteristics in the general UK population. In addition to this, Fiona has received a £10,000 research grant from the Royal College of Surgeons of England for her work on patient involvement in orthognathic treatment. Professors Susan Cunningham and Nigel Hunt supervise her in this endeavour.

Shari Daniels, along with supervisors Professor Nigel Hunt and Dr Rishma Shah, has been awarded £20,000 to support her research into the relationship between the muscles of mastication, mandibular growth and orthodontic therapies.

The UCL Eastman Dental Institute would like to congratulate bothShari and Fiona on their outstanding achievement and wish them every success with their research. DT

Could lollipops prevent tooth decay?



A recent study has shown that sugar-free lollipops containing liquorice root extract can significantly reduce the bacteria in salvia that causes tooth decay, specifically in pre-school children. For the research, which was published by the *European Academy of Pediatric Dentistry*, 66 pre-school children, aged between 2-5, were given the sugar-free lollipop twice a day for two weeks; levels of the bacteria Streptococcus mutans (SM), which is the primary culprit in tooth decay, were recorded at the start, during the study and nine weeks afterwards.

The results showed that a twice-daily use of the lollipop significantly reduced both number and relative per cent of bacteria SM in high-risk children, whilst SM numbers were further reduced for 22 days after the last lollipop.

The researchers concluded that the lollipops were a simple and effective potential for preventing caries in high-risk children.

The investigation was a collaborative effort of the Greater Lansing Area Head Start Program, the University of Michigan and the University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA) and was funded by the Research and Data Institute of the affiliated companies of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, New Mexico and North Carolina. DT

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Editorial comment

I hope everyone enjoyed the 'Summer' we've had, and is now turning their minds to the busy time for conferences and exhibitions that seem to happen just before the 'C' word (as I am writing this it is still just about August, I can't in good conscience talk about a certain event in December!).

I hope also that many of you have seen your appointment books bulging as the pre-school year checklist is being frantically ticked off by mums up and down the country (uniform – check; school shoes – check; dentist – check... you get the idea).

And don't forget, September is Colgate Oral Health Month so use it to promote good oral health to patients - for further information contact the Colgate Oral Health Month registration line on 0161 665 5881.

Finally a call to arms to our readers who like to write – I am always looking for contributions! From case presentations to event reviews, from user reports to 'how I did it' stories, get in touch with your ideas and you may see your labours of writing love in print! Email lisa@dentaltribuneuk.com with either the finished article or a short synopsis and I'll get back to you. Happy writing! DT

Do you have an opinion or something to say on any Dental Tribune UK article? Or would you like to write your own opinion for our guest comment page?

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What a floss of waste

An experiment involving animal waste has shown that dental floss has the potential to capture large amounts of hazardous gases before they are released in the environment.

The experiment, conducted by engineers from Texas A&M University's Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering in the US, were reportedly able to extract 50 per cent of ammonia emissions from liquid animal manure by simply using tubes based on expanded polytetrafluoroethylene (ePTFE), a highly versatile polymer which are used to manufacture fibres for cleaning teeth.

In recent years, scientists have recognised that the breeding of cattle and livestock has caused a great deal of environmental problems, such as ammonia emissions being released into the atmosphere, the contamination of grounding water and the acidification of soil and vegetation.

Figures from the US Environmental Protection Agency suggest that the US and China are the two largest producers of ammonia, releasing more than 15 million tons of ammonia into to the environment.

According to a report, the new technology, which has been developed by Drs Saqib Mukhtar and MD Burhan, uses the process of diffusion to help lower ammonia emission, allowing gases to move from places of higher to lower concentration, such as the ePTFE tubes. From here the product can reportedly be put to good use, forming a chemical compound that can in fact be used to fertilise soil.

Although the technology is still being tested, the scientists announced that the technology will be able to be used on a larger scale in the near future. DT

Join our Healthy Mouth Mission

The entire dental team can get involved in the 2011 campaign focusing on 'The Importance of a Good Oral Care Regime for a Healthy Mouth'.

Practice packs contain educational materials, motivational stickers and patient samples to enable dental teams to create their own display to drive awareness of the Colgate Oral Health Month Campaign.

The 2011 CPD programme 'Patients' Perception and Understanding of Prevention' providing verifiable CPD, is available to download by visiting www.colgateprofessional.co.uk

If your practice has not previously been involved in Colgate Oral Health Month, please call 0161 665 5881 to register.

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Dentsply names Ceram.X™ student winners

Ola Hassan (left) is named UK winner

Leeds University dental student, Ola Hassan has been named the UK winner of the sixth Dentsply Ceram.X™Case Contest and has entered the World Final.

Ola, who's studying at Leeds Dental Institute, won the contest for her case poster showing restorative procedures on a 57-year old male patient suffering from non-carious tooth tissue loss caused by erosion and attrition associated with a history of frequent alcohol consumption and bruxism. Teeth from 13 to 23 and 35 to 44 were restored with Ceram.X™ duo nano-ceramic composite.

Ola's poster, along with all the winning entries from around the world will be presented at the CONS Euro in Instanbul in October 2011.

Runners up for the UK contest were Rosemary Sykes, a final year student at Newcastle University Dental Institute and Kevin Lun from Bristol. Rosemary's entry was based on the treatment of a 47-year old male patient who presented with a 15-year history of tooth surface loss in all quadrants and lack of posterior tooth support. A diagnosis of tooth surface loss caused primarily by erosion and secondarily by attrition was made and attributed to bruxism, lack of posterior support and frequent consumption of acidic food stuffs. A diagnostic wax-up was prepared on retruded arc articulated casts. A two-step etch, rinse and bonding system was employed under rubber dam and the teeth were restored using Ceram.X™ duo+ (D3 and E3) followed by polishing using Ceram.XShofu discs and the Enhance system.

Kevin's case study was a 52-year old male with a history of tooth surface loss regarding his maxillary and mandibular anterior teeth. His main concerns were reduced self-esteem, an inability to smile without anxiety and difficulty on biting. The aetiology of tooth surface loss was diagnosed as attrition with secondary erosion, resulting in marked reduction of clinical crown height. This was due to bruxism and frequent consumption of diet cola at night.

Dentsply offers warmest congratulation to the three entries and the very best of luck to Ola in the world final.

Meanwhile, Dentsply is calling for current dental students to enter the 2012 Ceram.X™ Global Case Contest. Entrants must restore a tooth using Ceram.X duo or Ceram.X mono plus nano-ceramic restorative to compete.

The case must be presented using the poster template supplied by DENTSPLY, before and after photographs and a short description of each stage of the procedure.

The deadline for UK entries is 28th February 2012. DT

An app a day

Health Secretary Andrew Lansley has launched a call for new ideas for health apps that would help patients make informed decisions about their care.

Everyone, including patients, doctors, nurses and other health professionals and app developers, is invited to submit new ideas of health apps and online maps they think would be useful.

One leading example of an app that benefits patients is Choosing Well, developed by NHS Yorkshire & Humber for their local community, which allows people to search for their nearest NHS health services.

As part of this drive for ideas, Andrew Lansley has also asked people to come forward and name their favourite existing health applications.

Speaking to patients, doctors and nurses at Evelina Children's Hospital recently in London, Andrew Lansley said: "We want to give people better access to information that will put them in control of their health and help make informed choices about their healthcare.

"Over the next six weeks, we want to hear from patients, health professionals and budding app developers on their ideal new app. This is a unique opportunity for the NHS and those who develop apps to not only showcase their work but bring to life new ideas and realise true innovation in healthcare."

Mr Lansley also announced the panel of judges who would choose the best apps to be showcased at an event in autumn: "I'm pleased to have such influential panel members representing the NHS, patients and clinicians as well as technology and those who support entrepreneurs. Innovation is what will help us create a more modern and personalised NHS for patients."

The panel of judges includes Dr Shaibal Roy, Sir Bruce Keogh, Julie Meyer and Jennie Ritchie-Campbell. People can share their idea or suggestion by visiting http://mapsandapps.dh.gov.uk/. They can also vote for their favourite ideas at this site. DT

Lansley calls for ideas on health apps

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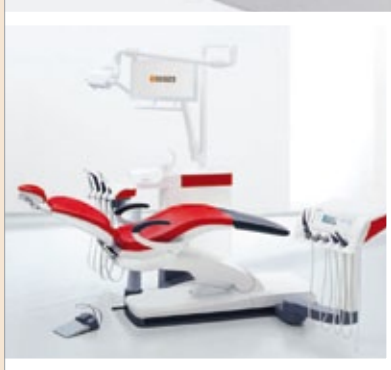

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Superannuation certificates could be positively dangerous

Dentists should have recently received their superannuation form SD86C for the year 2010-11. If in the past you haven't given any attention to this certificate, you certainly should now, says Johnny Minford, a Chartered Accountant and member of the NASDAL The certificate states how much is going into your NHS pension. You would also use this document to quantify your tax relief, and as part of the calculations for your other pension and retirement planning. So it's essential to check its accuracy.

You will remember the rush to get your Annual Reconciliation Report (ARR) submitted to your Primary Care Trust before the end of May. The ARR is intended to set out the achievement of UDAs or UOAs and who in the practice did them. The related superannuation is computed, and it is expected that the formal certificate SD86C then follows to be used as part of your tax submission.

Unfortunately, says Johnny, in his experience, the SD86Cs issued by many PCTs have largely ignored the ARR figures you have submitted. This means that they are wrong.

Johnny continued: "We have queried with some PCTs why this is so, and it appears that the issues are a mixed bag of internal deadlines, holidays, backlogs, miscommunications with the Business Service Authority (BSA), and so on. They say they are intending to process the ARRs and produce the 'proper' SD86C by the end of September."

"So the early issue of the SD86Cs has been worse than pointless – it has been positively dangerous. Any tax submissions made or pension decisions taken based on this ostensibly authoritative document now in your possession may be wrong, and for some high earning clinicians, very, very wrong. This could have a knock on effect on the tax payments currently being made, as the decision-making process may well be based on incorrect data.

Johnny warns that some dentists will at the very least need a "repair" to their tax submission to be made by their accountant with the correct information, when it is eventually released.

He said in conclusion: "So check your SD86C's before relying on it for any purpose. You have two months to inform the BSA that you do not consider it to be correct. If in doubt consult your accountant. Specialist advisers will be aware of what is going on - others will not. Your SD86C needs to be correct – either for now or for when you come to retire."

Johnny Minford is the founder and Senior Partner at Minford Chartered Accountants and can be contacted at Johnny@minford.eu He is a member of the National Association of Specialist Dental Accountants Lawyers group (NASDAL) DT

NASDA + Lawyers = NASDAL

NASDA (the National Association of Specialist Dental Accountants) has rebranded as NASDAL following the decision to assimilate the NASDA Lawyers' Group. The result is a new name and enhanced role for an organisation that's already well-established in the dental world.

Since its inception more than a decade ago, NASDA welcomed lawyers as associate members. As the business affairs of dentists have become more challenging, especially as a result of the complexities of the new and changing NHS contracts, and the impact of dental bodies corporate, there has been a growing need for accountants and lawyers to share information.

This has resulted in increasing numbers of lawyers joining NASDA so that the legal section now represents more than 25 per cent of the organisation. At their last meeting, the two specialist groups representing more than 50 professional firms agreed to merge and rebrand as NASDAL.

As part of this initiative, the organisation has a new website at www.nasdal.org.uk. However, other aspects of the organisation remain the same with Nick Ledingham as Chairman, Ray Goodman heading up the lawyers, Bob Cummings as tax specialist, Ajay Patel as webmaster, Frances Clark as secretary, Andy Hodgetts as treasurer, and Alan Suggett the media officer.

On behalf of NASDAL Lawyers, Ray Goodman said: "We are delighted at the rebranding which acknowledges the increased synergy between the specialist dental accountants and dental lawyers. We are proud to be part of an integrated organisation whose members provide the highest levels of professional support to dentists."

Nick Ledingham, [*pictured*], Chairman of NASDAL, commented: "From now on, our two groups of technical specialists will be discussing, considering and advising on the issues that matter to the dental profession in order to benefit our dentist clients. If you want specialist advice on dental issues, whether it's business, taxation or legal advice, the NASDAL website will point you in the right direction." DT

Running in memory of granddad

Reading runner, Chris Mortimer, 25, is taking part in the Oxford Half Marathon on 25th September in memory of his Grandfather, Frank Sterry and to raise much needed awareness and funds for mouth cancer charity, the Mouth Cancer Foundation.

Frank died in February 2011. He was diagnosed with mouth cancer two and a half years earlier when he found a tumor in his mouth. Surgery followed to remove a big part of his internal face and jaw which left Frank unable to eat solid food or speak properly.

Chris said: "My Granddad suffered so if I can raise even a small amount and it goes someway to helping someone then I will be satisfied."

Founder of the Mouth Cancer Foundation, Dr Vinod Joshi said: "As in Frank's case 25 per cent of mouth cancer cases are not associated with any known risk factor, hence the need for vigilance. If you notice a lump in your mouth that wasn't there before or a mouth ulcer which lasts for more than three weeks, you should see a dentist or doctor immediately. The money raised will go towards helping improve the support for mouth cancer sufferers and their families, as well as highlighting the shocking facts about mouth cancer."

To sponsor Chris visit www.justgiving.com/MortimerChris. For more information on the Mouth Cancer Foundation visit www.mouthcancerfoundation.org. DT

We'll meet again...

Elaine Halley discusses the final residential

The highlight of my MSc life since I last wrote was the final residential. It took place over five days in June, Thursday-Monday across the first glimpse of summer we had at a weekend (although I'm not bitter at all). It was a sheer delight to be in the MANDEC centre whilst the rest of the UK was sun-tanning and watching Wimbledon.

The first two days were spent with Ulf Krueger-Jansen from Germany who had some outstanding visual presentations using composites and particularly Venus flowable from Heraeus Kultzer. If you get a chance to see this gentleman's presentations and if, like me you are in awe of beautiful dental photography, then you should go! He taught us how to keep procedures uncomplicated and efficient, including cavity preparation and composite layering. He covered the triodent matrix technique and auxiliary aids for creating good proximal surfaces in an easy manner. He covered the often overlooked but massively important surface design and polishing procedures to ensure an optimum surface texture. He had a very straightforward method of restoring teeth with a mind to the natural structure of dentin and enamel layers. His work was absolutely outstanding! We also had the opportunity to try some of the techniques in the hands-on sessions.

The Saturday was spent with implant systems from Strauman and Nobel Biocare and lectures from Cemal Ucer. Our group is very mixed in their experience with implants and so it was useful to be able to compare the systems and to be able to discuss the differences and common philosophies.

Then came Sunday (after the Saturday night meal where I managed to eat my way round Manchester with Thai, Italian, Brazilian and Indian successively - delicious!), which was a full day of treatment planning discussion. We were split into groups of two and three and some of us had to present our cases to a panel from Manchester University, including Eddie Scher and Fiona Clarke and the rest of the class. We had time to discuss the treatment plan and justifications and then were quizzed; this wasvery useful and sparked some interesting debates. Ask 30 different dentists how to do a case and you may well get 30 different answers...

Monday was spent recovering from the shock of the dissertation explanation by Paul Brocklehurst; the good news is we can sign up to the aptly named 'Methodology for Dummies' being run by the University – yes please. We are all still reeling from the Unit 6 Research Module. The antidote for this was the fast-moving practicals with the excellent Stephen Davies on various hands-on techniques including equilibration, fabricating anterior guide planes, Broderick Flag technique (answers on a postcard)

And back home and straight into loads more webinars and FISCH (treatment planning) Case 2. It was a strange feeling that this was the last time we will be together as a class. We have now set up a Facebook group and there is a lot more interaction between us independent of webinars as we try to figure out how we will make it through all the assignments to the end of the course. The dissertation is the scariest as it is the furthest away from our comfort zones. Apparently, we need to expect 100hrs of work between September and December (I've worked that out - it's a full-time job alongside our other full time jobs!) Not to be taken lightly! Any questions? Email me! DT

About the author

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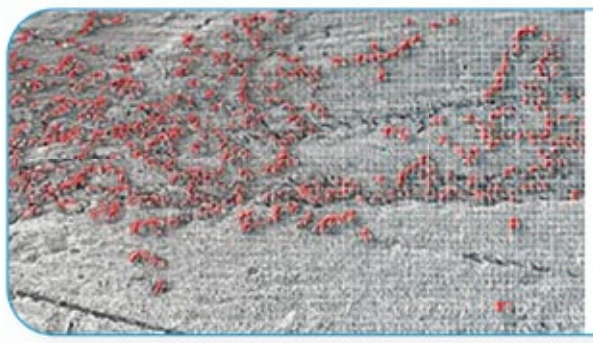
NEW

40% of denture patients are concerned about denture odour[1]

Yet many denture wearers fail to keep their dentures clean[2].

That's because brushing dentures with ordinary toothpaste can scratch denture surfaces[3]. And scratched surfaces can lead to bacterial growth[4] leading to denture odour.



Scanning electron microscope (SEM) images at 240 minutes confirm a significantly higher build up of Streptococcus oralis on denture materials previously cleaned with ordinary toothpaste vs. a non abrasive solution[5]

Poligrip denture cleansing tablets effectively remove plaque and tough stains[6] without scratching[3], to leave dentures clean and fresh. Poligrip Total Care denture cleansing tablets also kill 99.9% of odour causing bacteria.

Recommend Poligrip denture cleansing tablets to help your patients control denture odour

References: 1. GlaxoSmithKline data on file, 2010. **2.** Dikbas I et al, Int J Prosthodont 2006; 19: 294-8. **3.** GlaxoSmithKline data on file Study L2630368 2006. **4.** Charman KM et al. Lett Appl Microbiol. 2009; 48(4):472-477. **5.** GlaxoSmithKline data on file Study NPD/EU/062/07 2008. **6.** GlaxoSmithKline data on file Study USNPD 016 and CS5244.

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POLIGRIP

SPEAK, EAT AND SMILE WITH CONFIDENCE

The Dental Directory – celebrating 4

Founded originally as the Billericay Dental Supply Company in 1971 by Gordon Mills, who remains at the helm as chairman, the company began by offering a mail order service and did not employ its first sales representative until 1988. Within eight years, The Dental Directory – renamed in 1983 to reflect its national presence – had a sales force of 33 but not before we were sure this was what dentists wanted; an early reflection of our approach and attention to detail has helped build our reputation.

Always ahead of the curve

We started to use focus group market research in the mid 90s, which identified the need for expert field based sales representatives, whose product knowledge would complement our catalogue and the company. Dental practitioners wanted independent product advice from professional sales staff who were not employed by just one manufacturing company.

In the 40 years that we've been in business, dentistry has undergone significant changes; the move from NHS to private, huge technological advances, expansion of treatments and services, higher patient expectations and increased regulatory requirements. However, the company's ethos remains as solid as ever. The Dental Directory is still owned by the founding Mills family and is run as a hands-on, team effort.

As our Managing Director Martin Mills says: "At the end of the day, The Dental Directory works like a family, every member of staff will pitch-in and do what has to be done, to provide the best possible customer care."

Judging by this typical testimonial from a customer, we are achieving that aim: *"I've worked with a variety of wholesale companies and distributors over the years, and can confidently say the service and support that we have received has been nothing short of superb."*

Because The Dental Directory is family owned and has no outside shareholders or dividends to pay, we can react swiftly to the rapidly evolving dental market and have consistently re-invested in the business. In the past four years alone, more than £4.5m has been spent on a totally automated warehouse, stock holding capacity has been increased to around £17m at any one point and thus back orders have been all but eliminated.

Not only do we enjoy a reputation for excellent customer service, the company has long been established as a major philanthropic body, supporting a range of dental charities. In fact, to mark our 40th anniversary, we are establishing the The Dental Directory Chair in Primary Dental Care at Warwick University Medical School, which is thought to be the first new dental Chair to be created in over four decades and the first relating to High Street dentistry.

The plan, as Martin Mills explains, is to "…develop research projects aimed at improving the lot of the primary dental care provider who after all, is our main market so this is a way of putting something back into dentistry."

The Dental Directory also works with the AOG Charitable Trust and a further 14 groups funding newsletters, local

0 years of proud service to dentistry

L-R - Founder Gordon Mills and son Martin Mills

meetings, sponsorship of individuals on research projects or charitable work.

As all our clients know, The Dental Directory has a peerless record in staff retention which means that our loyal and dedicated team has worked with some of them for many years, seeing dental careers and practices progress.

These are just some of our customers' comments: *"Over the years I have built up an extremely strong bond with the company and I trust both the business as a whole, and the individual staff with whom I've worked."*

"I have been using the services of The Dental Directory since 1997, the service was excellent, and as a result I've been a client ever since."

In a world dominated by corporate giants and high staff turnover, the long service records of The Dental Directory staff is a testament to the way our company operates; 11 staff have been with the company for mroe than 25 years, 65 for more than 15 years and a further 34 who have been with the company for over ten years. The secret, according to Martin Mills and echoed by his father Gordon and fellow directors is: "A shared vision of customer service."

For a family business not only to survive but to prosper during the economic rollercoaster of the last 40 years is an achievement in itself, but it is clear from 16 years of Investors in People recognition that The Dental Directory has backed up its core values of customer service, with excellent management and staff relations, as reported: *"The well embedded culture of the company is, without doubt, one of continuously striving to maintain its investment in all of its people…(who) are totally clear and unambiguous with regard to what the company is about and how vital customer needs are."*

Or, as one member of staff puts it: "Continuous improvement is a fact of life for us." This is borne out by this satisfied customer: "The Dental Directory team are friendly and caring yet manage to be professional and efficient at the same time. They work hard and always manage to go that extra mile."

The Dental Directory will go that extra mile for another 40 years.