

DENTAL TRIBUNE

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News in brief

Government talk

Dental leaders called on the government to work much more closely with the profession at a Westminster Health Forum keynote seminar entitled *The Future of Dentistry*. The seminar was attended by key people in the sector such as Susie Sanderson, chair of the British Dental Association's executive board, Derek Watson, chief executive of the Dental Practitioners' Association and Chris Potts, president of The British Dental Health Foundation. The independent review into NHS dentistry being led by Professor Jimmy Steele, was the main topic of discussion at the event.

Asian statistics

Children of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani origin visit the dentist less frequently than any other ethnic group, according to new research. Three-quarters of all children under 16 in England have been for a check up in the last year - but the statistics are low for all British Asian groups. The government claims that Bangladeshi children from deprived backgrounds, who often have a high amount of sugar in their diet, are the worst affected. Sue Gregory, deputy chief dental officer for England, revealed that 45 per cent of boys and 46 per cent of girls of Bangladeshi descent have visited the dentist in the last 12 months. The Department of Health is producing guidance notes for all Primary Care Trusts with ideas on how to promote oral health care to the Asian community.

Teeth grinding

Teeth grinding is not recognised or treated by the majority of dentists in the UK, according to Dr Nigel Carter, chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation. His comments are backed by a survey carried out by NoBrux, a UK company that specialises in the supply of US-made dental guards to dentists and sufferers. This found that around 80 per cent of people claim their dentist does not routinely ask whether they grind their teeth and does not discuss treatment options. Teeth grinding or clenching, more commonly referred to as 'bruxism', usually occurs at night. Although there are many possible causes, the main one seems to be stress. NoBrux claims bruxism is much more widely known, both by dental professionals and the public, in America.

www.dental-tribune.co.uk

News & Opinions



All smiles

The profession turned out once again to support this year's launch party for National Smile Month at the House of Commons.

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Practice Management

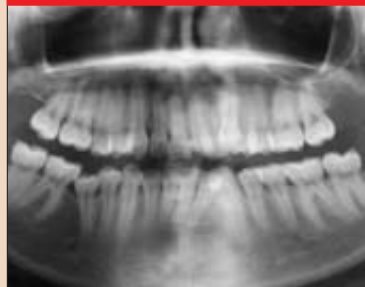


Tasty tips

Marketing enables you to make your practice utterly irresistible to patients seeking your high-value treatments. How sexy is your branding?

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Clinical



Complex process

Root resorption of the permanent teeth is a complex biologic process of which many aspects still remain unclear. Dr. Eugene Chan explains.

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Events



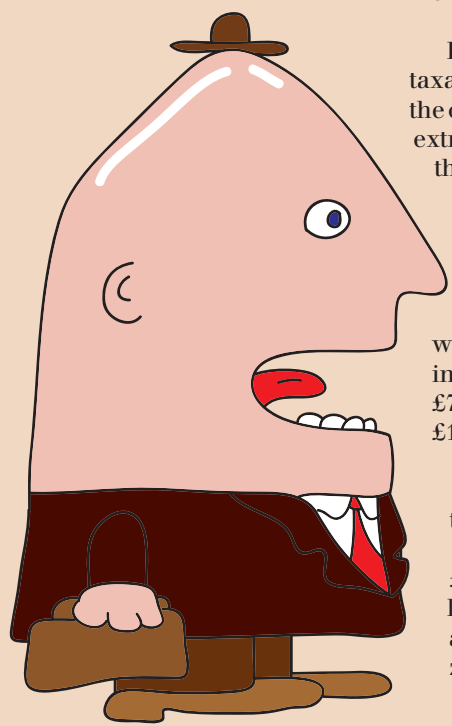
Charity jumps

There are over 20 centres across the UK where you can jump, and raise vital funds for Bridge2Aid at the same time, so sign up now.

► page 29

Budget proposals thrash dentists

Dental principals are among the taxpayers likely to be hardest hit by the Chancellor's Budget proposals, according to the National Association of Specialist Dental Accountants.



Mr Ledingham, said: 'There will be little incentive for many principals, particularly those in NHS practices, to undertake additional work, despite the fact that the proposals are designed to kick-start the economy.'

He claimed that a dentist with taxable earnings of £120,000 in the current tax year, who earns an extra £10,000 in taxable profit in the 2010/11 tax year, will be asked to pay an additional £6,690, effectively a tax rate of 66.9 per cent

Meanwhile, a dentist with taxable profit of £150,000 in 2009/10 will have to pay £7,690 if they earn an additional £10,000 profit in 2010/11.

Bob Cummings, NASDA's tax specialist, said that when a person's income exceeds £100,000 the personal tax allowance is gradually eroded and eventually reduces to zero as profits rise.

He added: 'Dentists earning over £100,000 will therefore see their tax bills increase even if their profits remain the same. For those earning over £150,000, the highest income tax rate also increases from 40 per cent to 50 per cent.'

Mr Cummings predicted that dentists who had not incorporated might consider doing so because of the potential for reducing tax liabilities. But he stressed that all the pros and cons should be considered first and said: 'I am sure all NASDA accountants will be working particularly hard to put in place tax strategies to ensure that their dental clients pay the minimum amount of tax legally possible.'

Mr Ledingham said: 'It should be noted that in recent years not everything that the Chancellor has presented in his Budget speech has ultimately found its

way into Statute. We will therefore have to wait until the Finance Act receives Royal Assent at the end of the summer before we know the final details. However, it is clear that the Chancellor is intent on increasing taxes and has his sights set on high earners.'

He added: 'It is going to be particularly important over the next few years for dentists to ensure that they have access to high quality tax planning advice from people who are not only experts in the area of tax planning, but who also have an in depth knowl-

'It is clear that the Chancellor is intent on increasing taxes and has his sights set on high earners'

edge of dentists and the business environment that they operate within.' **DT**

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The contract will provide access for 57,000 patients

Oasis Dental Care has won a £17m contract to help alleviate the huge gaps in NHS dental care in Northern Ireland. The contract means Northern Ireland should get 38 more NHS dentists.

Health Minister for Northern Ireland, Michael McGimpsey said he has awarded a £17m contract for the provision of additional dentists 'where they were most needed'. He claims that the contract will provide access for an additional 57,000 NHS patients.

The first dentists will be appointed first in the areas that need them most and are expected to be in post by the end of the year. The three-year contract has gone to Oasis Dental Care Ltd, which owns and operates 170 dental practices throughout England and Wales.

Mr McGimpsey said he hoped the new contract will 'greatly ease current access problems'. He added: 'Oasis Dental Care Ltd will provide 38 dentists, targeted in access 'hotspot' areas across

Oasis fills the gaps

Northern Ireland ensuring people can get the health service dental treatment they need. Oasis has extensive expertise and experience in providing dental services to health Trusts across the United Kingdom and the standards they have set are impressive.

My officials are working closely with the British Dental Association to achieve a new dental contract for all health service dentists in Northern Ireland, and I look forward to a successful conclusion to this process. However, there are access problems now that I have to address, and I am delighted that Oasis will work with us on this.'

The British Dental Association (BDA) gave a broad welcome to the announcement of the award of a tender for 38 new dentists in Northern Ireland as part of the solution to the problems some patients face accessing care.

But the BDA also warned that the 800 dentists already working in Northern Ireland need more

support and a new contract that allows them to provide the kind of modern, preventive care they are trained to do.

Dr Claudette Christie, director for the British Dental Association (BDA) in Northern Ireland, called the new contract a 'welcome step' but said: 'However, while this is welcome news, it is not the sole solution to the problems dentists and their patients face.'

Also important is that the dentists Northern Ireland does have are properly supported. The announcement recognises both the importance of prevention and the significant cost of providing care. The BDA is currently negotiating a new contract which we hope will support a preventive approach.'

Justin Ash, chief executive of Oasis Dental Care, said: 'We are delighted to have been chosen to be part of this significant boost to the health of the people of Northern Ireland and are delighted to be working in partnership with the Health Minister and the Health and Social Care Board.'

This contract is another resounding endorsement of Oasis Dental Care and our ability to deliver excellent health service dentistry.

Plans are already well advanced for the new Oasis practices and we look forward to welcoming new patients from across the province later this year. We will ensure that we keep local communities informed of the progress of the building work and when they will be able to register for treatment.'

The former Western board area will get 16 new dentists - in Enniskillen, Omagh, Strabane and Londonderry. In the former Northern board area, eight dentists are to be located in Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and Cookstown. Bangor/Donaghadee, Holywood, Dundonald/Castle-reagh, Lisburn/Dunmurry and Carryduff - in the former Eastern board area - will get 10 dentists. The former Southern board areas of Banbridge, Dungannon and Newry will each receive funding for two new dentists. DT

Dr Cockcroft backs e-learning

Smile-on's new e-learning programme 'complements' the government's guidance on improving oral health, said the chief dental officer.

Speaking about the learning resources provider's two-hour programme, *Delivering Better Oral Health*, the 'Prevention in Practice' CD Rom, Barry Cockcroft said: 'The learning resource that Smile on has produced should complement the document itself well and provides dentists with support to practically implement the mes-

sages within the dental practice environment.'

He added: 'One of the things we learnt from PDS (personal dental services) piloting was that most dentists were really keen to work in a more preventive way. We also learnt from the same pilots that most dentists were unaware of what evidence based prevention really was. We were delighted that the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry worked with us to produce such an excellent document in such a short time.'

The *Delivering Better Oral Health* toolkit, was sent to all NHS practices in England in 2007, by the Department of Health.

Dr Cockcroft revealed that the Department of Health has decided to update and send the hard copy document to all dentists with an NHS contract in June. The 'Prevention in Practice' CD Rom has been developed by Smile-on at the request of the Oxford Deanery.

It has had input from members of the team that produced the Department of Health toolkit.

The CD Rom looks at patient self-care and how practitioners can raise self-care issues with patients. This includes oral health messages as well as advising patients on healthy diets, sensible drinking, and smoking cessation.

Users can see actual interviews from a dentist and a dental care professional who have successfully implemented the toolkit into their practice. The programme is for all dental professionals from dentists to orthodontists to hygienists. Each learning programme provides two hours of CPD.



Dr Cockcroft

For more information on the programme, call 020 7400 8989 or email info@smile-on.com DT

Police renew murder appeal

Police investigating the alleged crimes of a Northern Ireland dentist accused of murder, have renewed their appeal asking for former patients to come forward.

Dr Colin Howell, is accused of murdering his wife and his ex-lover's husband. The 50-year-old, from Castlerock, is also charged with drugging and indecently assaulting a number of women.

Two months ago, detectives wrote to former patients at practices in Ballymoney and Bangor as part of their enquiries. They have now issued a renewed appeal.

Detectives are investigating alleged serious crimes which may have occurred at the Causeway Dental Implant Clinic in Ballymoney over a number of years and

at Bangor West Dental and Implant Clinic in Bangor between 2003 and 2008. The investigation does not involve any other member of staff at the clinics.

Officers are asking patients if they have any information that may assist the inquiry team or if they have concerns. Police have revealed that a number of patients have already come forward and this latest renewed appeal is to ensure that 'every possible step has been taken to identify all victims in this part of the investigation'.

Police say any contact will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Howell, who has 10 children, is in custody charged with the murders of his wife Lesley, 30,

and Trevor Buchanan. Their bodies were found in a car filled with carbon monoxide fumes in Castlerock in May 1991.

Howell, has had his registration suspended by the General Dental Council for 18 months. Howell, who had surgeries in

Ballymoney and Bangor, is seen as one of the foremost dental practitioners in Northern Ireland.

The police inquiry team can be contacted on 028 7035 0935 or 028 7035 0920. DT

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Editorial comment

Seeing the light

A friend said last week that her permanently and happily unemployed friend and her children regularly fly out to Florida for holidays at Disneyland. 'How she does it when she doesn't have a job I just don't know,' she said. But when she added up her friend's tax credits, council tax benefits, plus the rest of the frills, it all became crystal clear. Now don't get me wrong – there are plenty of people out there struggling to scrape by on benefits and deserve every penny and some, but there are also others who are positively living the life of O'Riley. So who's paying for it all?

High earning go-getters have always been penalised by Mr Brown to some degree, but introducing these new taxes is like saying 'bring on the brain-drain now'.

For getting taxed to the hilt is hardly going to motivate the na-

tion to work hard and build better businesses. Earning £100k in the UK is really not a lot these days – the average family household needs at least this to pay the mortgage, meet spiralling bills and put

food on the table. So is having a holiday so much to ask after grafting the hours away day in, and day out in the practice? Apparently so, according to the Chancellor. Ok so he hasn't said as much but ac-

tions speak far louder than words don't they.

Thatcher's children were all geared up to work hard and think about earning money and lots of it. She may have taken the milk away, but it didn't half motivate us to work hard to make sure we earned enough to buy our own pint. But now why bother? For the harder we work, the less we earn. What a wonderful way to kick-start an ailing economy. 

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?

If so don't hesitate to write to: The Editor, Dental Tribune UK Ltd, 4th Floor, Treasure House, 19-21 Hatton Garden, London, EC1N 8BA.

Or email: penny@dentaltribuneuk.com

House raffle is extended

A dental technician, who put his £490,000 house up for sale in a £25 raffle, has extended the competition for a further three months, following poor ticket sales.

Stephen and Caroline Sickelmore are hoping to sell their £490,000 four-bedroom home in Devon, through a raffle. Tickets cost £25 each and if the couple sell all their tickets, they will get £675,000.

The winner will also get other benefits including their stamp duty paid, legal fees and a contribution towards moving expenses, plus an up-front payment of 12 months' council tax of £1,700 for the Band E property. The detached Summer Breeze in Dawlish, comes with sea views, split-level design and three bathrooms.

The couple have promised to donate 3.6 per cent of the prize fund, up to £25,000, to Force cancer charity in Exeter. However, the couple have only sold 1,523 of the tickets since the raffle began in January. They have now decided to extend the competition for a further three months to the 24 July 'to ensure we give the competition the chance of selling all of the tickets'.

People can buy tickets from the couple's website where they have to answer three questions correctly as part of their entry to the draw.

To find out more, visit website www.summerbreezecompetition.co.uk 

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References: 1. Standard laboratory testing of dentine abrasion versus a leading soft manual toothbrush. Data on file, Colgate-Palmolive. 2. Standard laboratory testing of bristle stiffness versus a leading soft manual toothbrush. Data on file, Colgate-Palmolive. 3. Nathoo S *et al.* New Jersey Dental School, UMDNJ, 2006. Data on file, Colgate-Palmolive.



National Smile Month 2009 is declared open

The profession turned out in style last week to support the British Dental Health Foundation's 34th National Smile Month campaign despite the Sri Lankan protest in Parliament Square.

Held at the House of Commons, *Look After Yourself, Brush for Health* was declared open by Deputy Chief Dental Officer Sue Gregory. After thanking sponsors, P&G, Oral B, Wrigley's Orbit Complete and Tesco Dental In-

surance, the Foundation's chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said: 'The foundation only acts as a facilitator to help make the campaign as it is, but it would never be as successful without the help from the rest of the profession.'

Following the welcoming speech from President Chris Potts, special guests took to the lectern to speak on the importance of the UK's largest oral health awareness campaign.

Television star Dr Uchenna Okoye represented campaign supporters Oral B and was joined by Adrian Toomey, oral care brand manager for fellow campaign supporter Wrigley's Orbit Complete. Tesco Dental Insurance was the third of a trio of Platinum Supporters for the campaign.

Said Dr Uchenna Okoye: 'My idea was to talk about the F-word – floss – but my expectations were exceeded when I thought am I doing what I say?! Our job isn't to beat our patients over the head with information but to counteract the effects of inadequate oral health. Everyone plays a part to get the message out there and I believe this will be the best campaign yet so well done.'

Following the celebrations Dr Nigel Carter said: 'The National Smile Month launch proved a fantastic event as once more the great and the good of UK dentistry came to toast this year's campaign. We are sure the campaign theme *Look After Yourself, Brush for Health* will get the nation talking about the importance of good oral health and we anticipate yet another successful campaign.'

'This event will hopefully prove to be the perfect platform for events across the country and we look forward to the activities organised by all our supporters.'

National Smile Month runs from May 17th until June 16th 2009, with a second National Smile Month USA running the length of June in conjunction with Oral Health America.

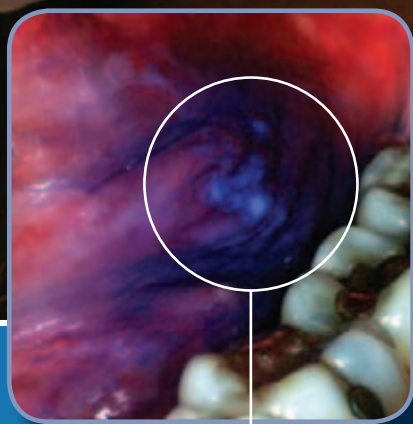
Scores of events across the UK will help drive the British campaign. Practices, schools, businesses, hospitals and Primary Care Trusts can find information, downloadable press release templates, sponsorship forms and a chance to register their activity at the website www.nationalsmile-month.org.

For a chance to win an oral health supply pack for the primary school of your choice upload your National Smile Month photos online to take part in the campaign photo competition.

For more information contact the Foundation on 0870 770 4014 or email pr@dental-health.org.

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BDHF welcomes mouth cancer treatment

A potential development in mouth cancer treatment has been welcomed by the British Dental Health Foundation.

The British Dental Health Foundation has welcomed results of studies at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University in New York.

The study 'The histone deacetylase inhibitor LBH589 inhibits expression of mitotic genes causing G2/M arrest and cell death in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma cell lines' showed that an anti-cancer compound killed off mouth cancer cells removed from head and neck cancer patients.

Nearly 5,000 people are diagnosed with mouth cancer in the UK each year and currently just half of those diagnosed survive beyond five years. The new studies – found when scientists tested a drug for its effects on blood cancer and reported in the online edition of the Journal of Pathology – will it is hoped, mark a significant breakthrough.

The experimental drug involved new chemotherapy agents known as histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors - which limit cell growth.

Lead researcher, Einstein clinician Richard Smith, M.D. said: 'This report shows that an HDAC inhibitor is effective on head and neck cancer cell lines, and that is the first step toward use in humans.'

The Foundation's chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said: 'Such news, though very early days, is to be welcomed as the low long-term survival rate from mouth cancer makes the disease one of the deadliest.'

Currently the best chance of beating the cancer comes from early detection, improving survival rates to more than 90 per cent, so it is important to follow the slogan of the Mouth Cancer Action Month campaign: 'If in doubt, get checked out.'

He added: 'Though this research could prove important, it is vital that dentists and health professionals continue to perform oral screenings and educate on how to look out for signs of oral cancer. Maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle also helps to prevent problems developing.' The most common causes of oral cancer are smok-

ing and drinking alcohol to excess, linked to 80 per cent of cases. Research has recently suggested that the human papillomavirus (HPV) transmitted via oral sex, could soon become one of the most common causes of the disease.

Quitting smoking, cutting down on alcohol and eating a bal-

anced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables lowers the risk of mouth cancer.

Mouth Cancer Action Month 2009 takes place in November.

For more information go online at www.mouthcancer.org or call the National Dental Helpline on 0845 063 1188. 



Dr Carter backs the news

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Extra cash for Kent

Thousands more patients will have access to NHS dental care in Kent after NHS West Kent announced an extra £2.7m of funding.

The investment means that 6,000 more patients both in Tonbridge and Aylesford and 4,000 people each in Swanley, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells will benefit from NHS dental care.

As well as general dental procedures such as check-ups, fillings and root canal work, funding will go towards orthodontic procedure. 

Children-only dental practice

A couple in the Midlands have set up the first dental practice in the UK that is solely for children. The children go into a brightly coloured room and they are then introduced to the hygienist and then the dentist.

'By the time they eventually sit in the dentist's chair they feel safe and realise that, actually, it's no big deal,' said Sara Reece who established Smilescool with partner Mike Reece.

Smilescool is aimed at pupils aged up to 11. The children learn how to brush and floss, and they can also carry out scientific experiments such as looking at their teeth under a microscope.

They get a two-minute egg timer for teeth brushing, a pen torch to see inside their mouth, and fun wall charts and stickers to record their progress on a daily basis.

Each week, they chew a disclosing tablet which shows dental plaque – then record the results.

'The beauty of this approach is that parents can see in an instant if their child is brushing effectively and making progress,' says Dr Reece. He points to the Government 'Future Study' 2005, which found that if children take care of their teeth and mouths in the early years, there is an 89 per cent chance that at 15 years old they will stay free from decay.

Dr Reece describes Smilescool as 'a comprehensive education programme' and said: 'It is not about fixing problems as they arise, it is about prevention'.

Chief executive of The British Dental Health Association, Dr Nigel Carter, called it a 'highly innovative project that we are confident will help towards positive progress in children's oral health'.

While Professor Chapple, professor of periodontology at the Periodontal Research Group at the Birmingham School of Dentistry described it as 'the best



Smilescool is aimed at pupils aged up to 11 years old

innovation in dentistry that I have seen in many years'.

He added: 'It is time we started implementing preventative care models properly, rather than paying lip service to prevention. This means we have to start with infants and influence their values and lifestyles to prevent common oral diseases. Given the strong associations established between peri-

odontitis and cardiovascular disease, adverse diabetes outcomes and stroke, and the recognition that obesity, poor diets and sedentary lifestyles impact upon periodontal health and general health, we also have a key role to play in motivating youngsters to better lifestyles.

The successful implementation of M.I.K.E.S. System (a key component within the smile-

scool programme) will have a hugely beneficial effect in educating, motivating and empowering patients to achieve better oral health and therefore better general health.'

Smilescool charges a monthly fee based on the age of the child, which ranges from £3.42 to £14.48.

The fees includes the 'check-up' provision by the dentist, any treatment the child might need, the services of the hygienist/therapist for preventative treatments such as fissure sealants and the educational, prevention focused oral health care 'POD' sessions with the dental health educator and smilescool team.

The child will also have access to one of Smilescool dentists for 'out-of-hours' advice and treatment in the event of a dental emergency. The child will also be eligible for UK & Worldwide insurance in the event of a dental injury or accident away from home. [DT](#)



It's a great opportunity for the GDC's voice to be heard in Scotland

Raising the profile

The director for Scotland has been working hard to raise the profile of the General Dental Council since he took on the new role this year.

The newly created role is the General Dental Council's (GDC) next step in targeting its resources more carefully to meet the needs of the four nations of the United Kingdom.

Mr Jackson has a background in business development and consultancy and voluntary experience in education, and was previously partnership director at BT Scotland.

He said: 'It's a great opportunity for the GDC's voice to be

heard in Scotland – and for us to listen to others. I'm working closely with the Scottish Parliament, members of the public and the dental profession so they realise the GDC isn't a London-centric regulator.

We are keen to find ways of making the GDC more relevant to people in Scotland. The GDC promises to protect patients and regulate the dental team – that's the principal aim in all my work.'

Making connections with patient groups is a priority. He has also attended Scottish cross professional and regulatory groups, had informal discussions with the public health ministers and MSPs, and spoken at the Scottish

Local Dental Committees' Conference.

Speaking about his new role, Ian Jackson said: 'Scotland is different in that it has its own system of government and professionals tend to interact differently. One of the challenges ahead is to work effectively within this framework.'

My aim is for people in Scotland to better understand what the GDC does whether it's giving dentists and dental care professionals guidance, checking educational standards or investigating complaints. And I'm here, ready to listen to find out more about how we can help develop the GDC's role.' [DT](#)

Calling top dental teachers

The Dental Defence Union, has begun its annual search for Britain's top dental teachers.

Students and vocational dental practitioners have until 31 August to nominate their teachers or trainers for the Dental Defence Union's (DDU) Educational Awards, now in its seventh year.

Rupert Hoppenbrouwers, head of the DDU, said: 'The DDU believes that dental educators make an enormous contribution to the future strength of the dental profession by demonstrating

good practice, instilling professionalism and most of all, inspiring the next generation of dental professionals.

We are always extremely impressed by the high standards of teaching we learn about during the Educational Awards and last year's winners – Professor Dayananda Samarawickrama, Alison Grant and Stephen Brookes – were a great example of how great teaching has made a difference to many students and trainees.'

Dean Hallows, marketing director of Dentsply, which is sponsoring the awards said: 'Dentsply

is delighted to once again sponsor the DDU Educational Awards. Supporting our next generation is of paramount importance and dental teachers play a pivotal role in advancing the profession; these awards are just one way of promoting their success and highlighting excellence in this area.'

There are three award categories: Dentist Teacher of the Year, Vocational Teacher of the Year and Dental Care Professional (DCP) Teacher of the Year.

The winners will be chosen on 18 November at an awards ceremony in central London.

Finalists will be awarded £250 each and the overall winners in each category will receive £1,000 towards the cost of educational materials for their schools or VT schemes.

Awards will be judged across a number of criteria, including knowledge of the subject and the ability to motivate others.

Students and vocational dental practitioners in the UK and Ireland can download or complete a nomination form online at the DDU website, www.the-ddu.com/dduawards,



Rupert Hoppenbrouwers

or obtain one from their DDU dental liaison manager. [DT](#)

Welcoming you... to a winning team



DENPLAN AWARDS



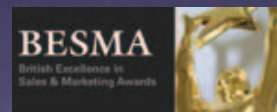
'Top 5 placing' for workplace

Fourth place in the Sunday Times 100 best companies to work for 2009 (mid-sized companies)



'Runner-up' for customer service

Voted second in the Top 50 Call Centres for Customer Service 2008 with a score of 91%



'Rising Star' for sales support / customer service

British Excellence in Sales & Marketing Awards (BESMA) for our Practice Support Advisor team



'Three Stars' for engagement

Best Companies Three Star Accreditation for employee engagement



'Runner-up' for sustainability

Sustainable Business Awards (large business category)

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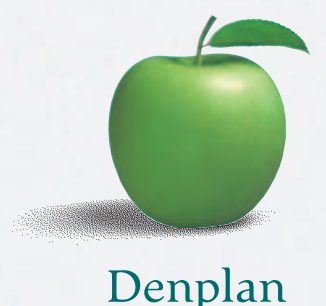
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Dental appointments 'actively discouraged'

Nearly one in eight managers in the UK do not trust their staff when it comes to taking time off to visit the dentist. Thirteen per cent of bosses dictate when employees

can visit the dentist and in some cases, actively discourage any visits to the dentist during working hours, according to Simplyhealth's Annual Dental Survey.

Liverpool is home to some of the least trusting managers, with almost one in four admitting they strictly control when members of staff visit the dentist.

Managers in Cardiff are among the strictest, with more than a quarter requesting dental appointments are carried out during the employees' own time.

A similar number of managers in Brighton (20 per cent) confess to operating a system where staff are 'encouraged' to get their teeth checked out during lunch breaks, after work or at weekends.

But while many managers admit to subjecting their staff to high levels of scrutiny, bad dentistry can have a negative effect on workers' careers, according to health provider Simplyhealth.

Three-quarters of employees feel their chances of career progression could be affected because they have bad teeth, while four out of 10 managers say an employee with an unattractive smile or bad breath would not be taken to client meetings.

Nearly a third of bosses give bad teeth as a reason for not promoting an employee, the survey found.

The survey also suggests that while many employers are unhappy about staff taking time out of the working day to visit the dentist, more than half believe staff absenteeism would be significantly reduced if dental benefits were included in the employee benefits package. Meanwhile three-quarters indicate its provision would lead to an improvement in employee morale.

James Glover, corporate director at Simplyhealth, said: 'All managers want to be able to trust their staff, as a positive relationship between manager and employee is far more likely to lead to a good and sustained working relationship.'

But staff absenteeism is a frustrating and costly issue for many managers in the UK, and giving staff time off to get their teeth checked can have a significant impact on the day-to-day running of a business.

The economic conditions are certainly playing their part in how infrequently people visit the dentist, and indeed 45 per cent of people we questioned cited cost as the main reason for delaying treatment.

However, those who decide to put off dental treatment can only expect their teeth to get worse, which can ultimately result in more expensive treatment and the need to take more time off work.' **DT**

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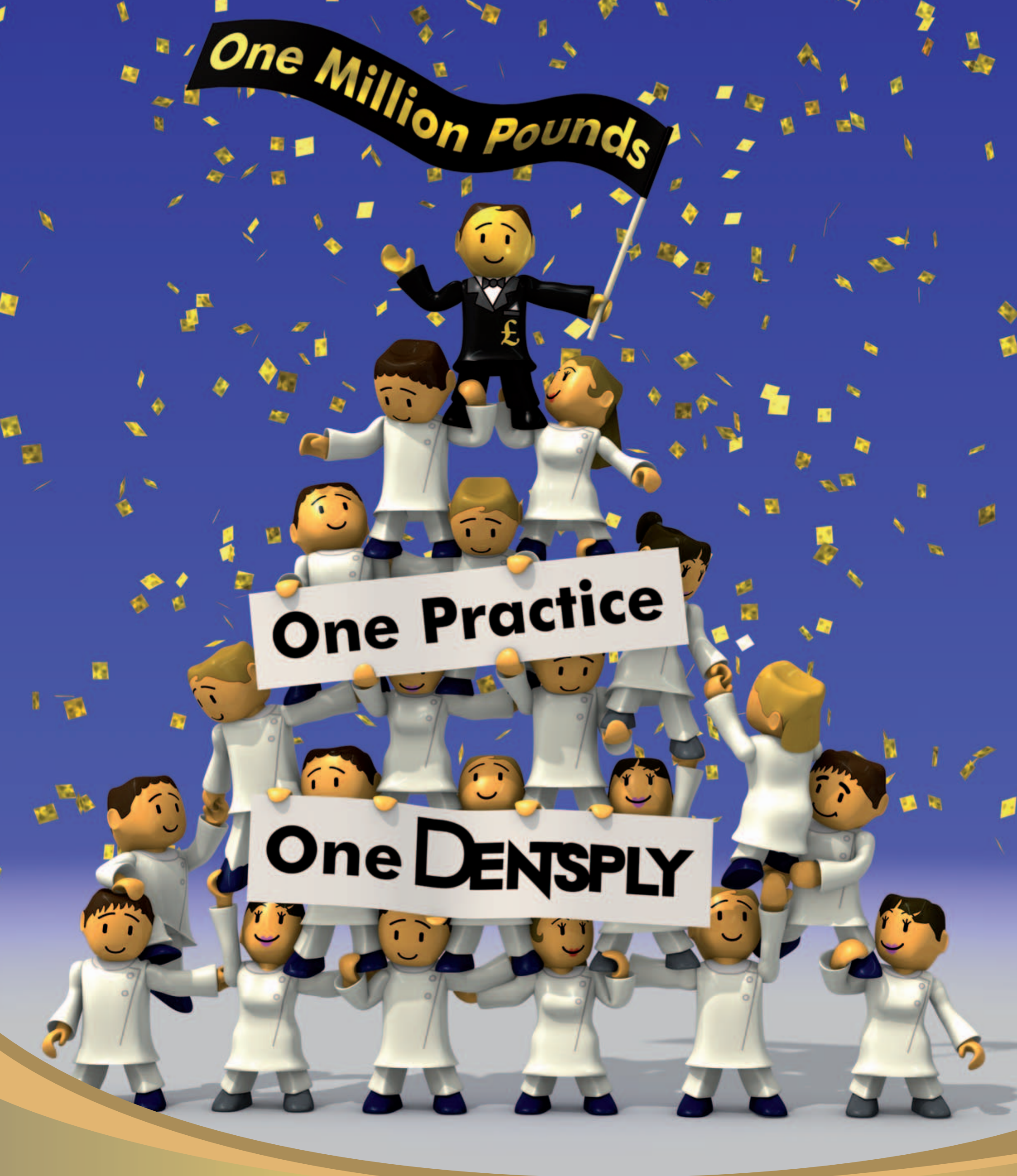


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