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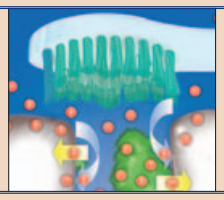

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The Philippines to host Health Tourism Congress

Global market projected to grow by US$20 billion until 2012

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

LEIPZIG, Germany: The Philippines has won the bid to host the next World Health Tourism Congress in Manila, the organiser Aura International has announced. The country will be the first outside Europe and the Asia Pacific region to host the event, which will be held at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila on 26–29 March 2009. Previous congresses have been held in Germany, Cyprus, and Spain.

Hadi Malaeb, managing partner of the Dubai-based events company, told the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* that the Philippines won the bid for hosting the congress in 2009 partly because of an emerging trend in the Middle East to tour Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines. He said that 92,000 medical tourists from the United Arab Emirates came to the Philippines last year, compared to 60,000 who went to Thailand.

Malaeb said that a 2006 Globalysis study estimated the global health and wellness tourism industry at US$40 billion, which is projected to grow to US$60 billion by 2012. "The Asian market alone consists of 1.5 million medical tourists spending a daily average of US$362 compared with the US$144 of regular inbound visitors," he added.

Street scene in Manila, the Philippines, Photo: PIDS.

The tourism industry in the Philippines has been promoting the country health-care destination for the past few years. During a medical tourism and wellness summit in October, Tourism Secretary Joseph H. Durano emphasised the wellness sector as part of the Department of Tourism's 'recession-proof strategy' to ensure tourism growth amid the economic downturn. Tourism Undersecretary Cynthia L. Carrion told reporters that the country has internationally recognised healthcare facilities that compete with those in Thailand and Singapore.

Carrion also said that her department recently set up a technical working group for health and wellness tourism with representation from both the public and private sectors. The department is also developing a statistical database to track the industry's progress, and has negotiated tax incentives for medical tourism from the Board of Investments. DT

US military recruits foreign doctors

WASHINGTON, DC, USA: The US Department of Defense has announced the start of a recruiting campaign aimed at foreigners living in the United States on temporary visas, to fill critical shortages of medical personnel in the military. In recent years, the Army has had trouble recruiting medical professionals, not meeting its goals for applicants for medical and dental scholarships in exchange for military service.

The campaign, which has been under consideration for several years, allows the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force to recruit from the thousands of foreigners studying in the United States temporarily as legal aliens. Currently, there are about 29,000 non-citizens serving in the US military in return for expedited citizenship. Since 2001, nearly 43,000 foreigners have become citizens while serving in the military. DT

AD

Registration desk at IDEM Singapore 2008. The show recently received the Approved International Fair Awards of the Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau. BUSINESS, page 9

Tooth decay in Malaysia

A new oral health campaign by the Ministry of Health in Malaysia and international toothbrush manufacturer Oral-B has revealed that nine out of ten Malaysians have problems with their teeth and gums. Half of the population also visit their dentist only if there is a noticeable problem. DT

Units for Wagga Wagga

Planmeca reported that its distributor Henry Schein is outfitting the new Charles Sturt University dental school in Wagga Wagga, Australia, with a complete line of Planmeca products. The University is purchasing 82 simulation units, 78 Compact I dental units & 32 digital intraoral X-ray units. DT

Taiwan needs more implant training

According to an article in the *Tapei Times*, only 140 of 15,000 dentists in Taiwan are certified to place dental implants. An official of the Department of Health told the newspaper that although dentists in the country are allowed to perform the procedure, there is no effective quality control for the profession. Patients should check whether their dentists have received certification from professional groups before getting implants.

Globally, implantology is the fastest growing market segment in dentistry with a projected market volume of US$2 billion. Taiwanese customers buy around 100,000 dental implants every year, figures of Taiwan's Academy of Oral Implantology (AOI) say. DT

Health education change in The Philippines

LEIPZIG, Germany: The Philippines is undertaking a major renovation of health education, starting with a moratorium on the establishment of new medical and nursing schools. While the country presently produces more nurses than it needs, primarily to raise foreign remittances, many doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and other health professionals, such as dentists, consider migrating, due to poor working conditions and low salaries. "This leads to a paradoxical situation where the major producer of health providers has a dearth of the same resource" as noted in the Health Human Resource Development Master Plan (2005–2030).

Approved by the Department of Health in 2004, the Master Plan is driving the country's policy on health education priorities for a broad range of health professions. It aims to change the distribution of physicians, dentists, and other health professionals based on needs, geographic characteristics, and socio-economic factors.

"It's the first time that a major overhaul is being made of the entire health education system," says Dr Fely Marilyn E. Lorenzo, co-author of the Master Plan and professor at the University of the Philippines Manila. She told the *Manila Times* that it would take as long as five to ten years to establish the system, and after that to sustain it.

"We hope that the plan will rationalise the production and utilisation of health workers," she said. DT

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New resource on infective endocarditis for dentists in Australia

SYDNEY, Australia: Health professionals in Australia can now access a new leaflet explaining recent changes to infective endocarditis guidelines, which has been developed by the National Prescribing Service Ltd (NPS), an independent, non-profit organisation for quality use of medicines in Australia.

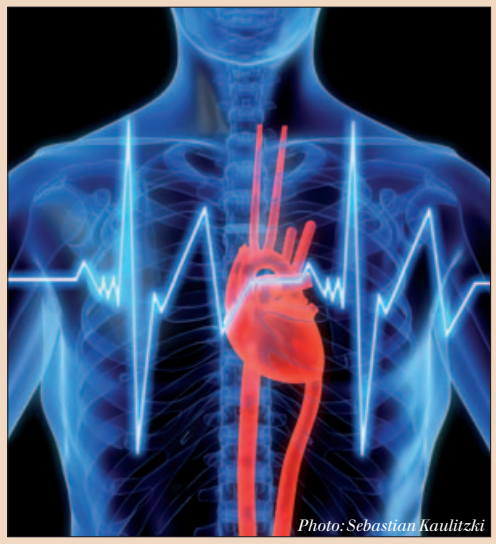

Photo: Sebastian Kaulitzki

The new guidelines for antibiotic prophylaxis for preventing infective endocarditis were introduced by a multidisciplinary group of health professionals back in July 2008. They recommend antibiotic prophylaxis only for patients with the highest risk of adverse outcomes, and specify the heart conditions and procedures for which antibiotic prophylaxis is now recommended. The leaflet explains these recent changes to antibiotic prophylaxis guidelines, as well as dental work or surgery warranting this, in lay terms.

Endocarditis is a rare condition that causes inflammation of the heart lining, muscles, and valves. It can occur at any age, but is more common in people aged 50 years and older, and is commonly caused by germs in the mouth entering the blood. "This online resource will help dentists, doctors and other health professionals to explain the changes to patients, especially those who may be anxious about how the changes will affect them," NPS Executive Manager of Quality Use of Medicines Programs, Karen Kaye, said.

The Australian Dental Association, Therapeutic Guidelines, and the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand have endorsed the patient information leaflet. It is available for download from the NPS website. DT

HIV/AIDS on the rise in Pakistan

LONDON, UK/LAHORE, Pakistan: The charity organisation *Save the Children* UK has released a report on the recent threat of HIV/AIDS that is gradually infecting especially children in Pakistan. The report was conducted with the help of *Protection and Health of Children against Abuse and Neglect* (PEHCHAN) in Lahore and estimates 74,000 HIV-positive cases, ranging between 24,000 and 150,000.

Demographic vulnerability, high prevalence rates of Hepatitis B and C, as well as risky sexual behaviours, and low contraceptive use compound the likelihood of contracting HIV/AIDS in Pakistan. Male child prostitution, for example, is more common than any other form of commercial sexual exploitation, according to an article by the Pakistani newspaper *The News*. There are 15,000–20,000 estimated child sex workers in Lahore alone, and as much as 15 to 25 per cent of children in Pakistan are affected by sexual abuse. At least 36 children of the 58 interviewed said they had one or more symptoms of sexually transmitted infections. Talking to *The News*, Dr Naeem Zafar, a PEHCHAN representative, confirmed that these vulnerable children are almost entirely without help, as everybody, including government officials, NGOs, and even the media, exploits them for their own gain.

The report further says that early marriage can make girls under 18 vulnerable to HIV. In rural areas, as much as 42 per cent of girls below the age of 19 are married, and their husbands, usually older men, are likely to be sexually experienced. In addition, poverty and a lack of education compound vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. DT

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DENTAL TRIBUNE Asia Pacific Edition

Dear reader,

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

As the year draws to a close I would like to extend my best wishes for 2009 to all our readers. The problem we all face next year is uncertainty about the future. The financial crisis that started on Wall Street this autumn has just begun to unfold in other parts of the world, and although there are many opinions about the short- and long-term effects, no one is really able to foresee whether it will affect us for only a few months or in the years to come.

The latest news from the market place in Asia is not very promising. China, as one of the key players in the region, has just witnessed its largest drop in exports in nearly a decade. At the same time, foreign direct investment has fallen by 36.5 per cent compared to November 2008. The Asia Development Bank in Manila recently predicted a significant slowdown in economic growth of more than 5 per cent for the entire region. Policy makers and industry players have to act swiftly if the industry is to withstand the crisis.

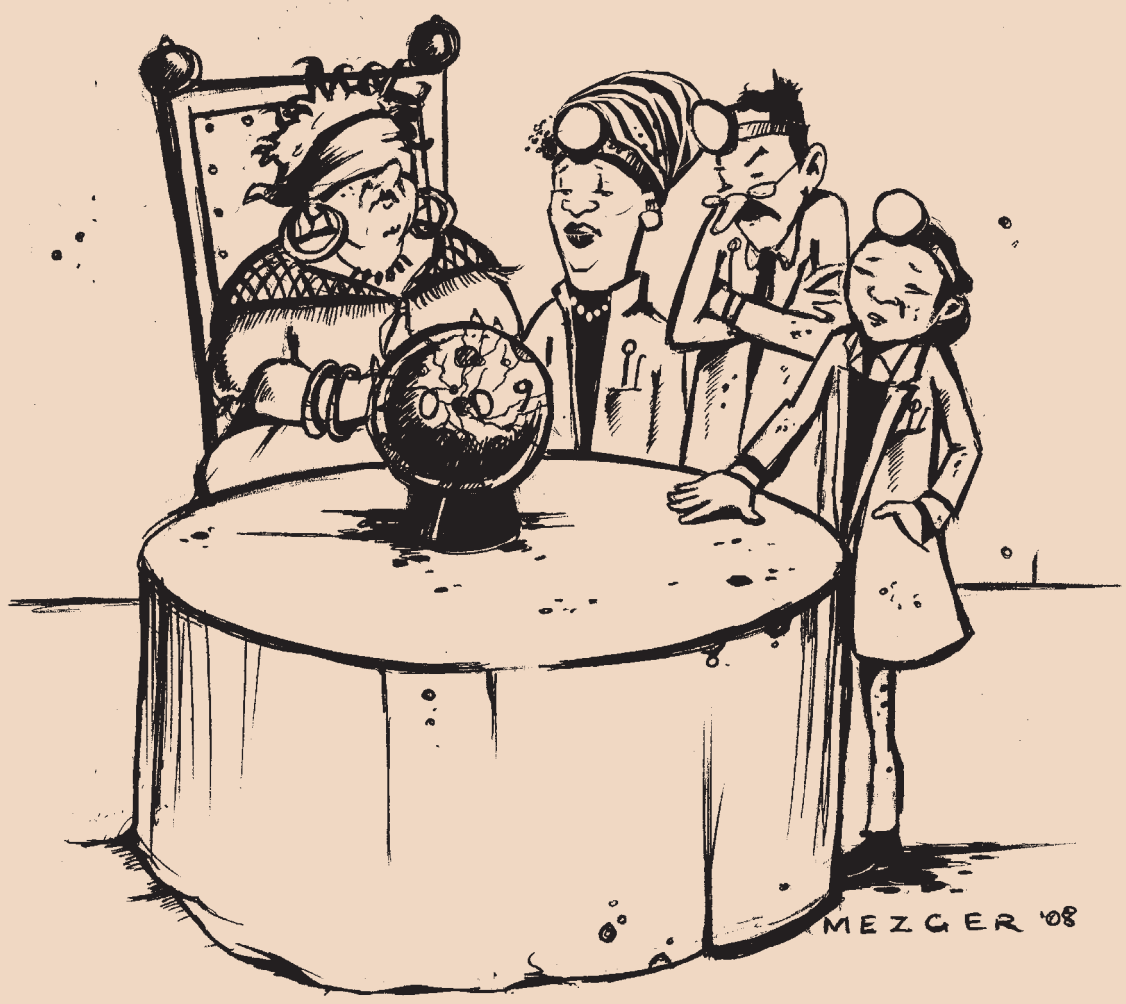
Prospects look rather uncertain for the dental profession. In recent years, dentistry in most markets has been driven mainly by high-cost procedures, like dental implants and cosmetics, but these sectors will probably be the first to suffer from the economic slowdown. One of the factors that could help the profession is health tourism. Ironically, fuel prices have seen a sharp decrease in the last two months, which could boost the influx of patients from overseas to destinations like Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Despite what happens in 2009, we will continue to put our best efforts into informing you of the latest developments in Asian and international dentistry. We hope that you will benefit from this knowledge, and encourage you to send us regular feedback on our articles and suggestions for future articles on matters that interest you. As official publishing partner of the FDI World Dental Federation, we will also be present at the Annual World Dental Congress in Singapore next year September. We look forward to possibly meeting you there or at future international events.

We wish you a successful and happy New Year in 2009! DT

Daniel Zimmermann
Group Editor
Dental Tribune International

I foresee ...



Motivating the motivator

Mhari Coxon
United Kingdom

This last month the clinic has been busy. I'm not complaining—what with the credit crunch in full flow, I'm happy that people are still coming for treatment. My colleague has also just left, and now I'm the only hygienist in my practice, and am well aware of the appointment book filling up weeks in advance. To top it all off, my personal life is busy too.

When life is busy like this, it is easy to get a little lax and decide to skip some things to keep on time and make life easier. We can get tired and de-motivated just like everyone else. After all, we need motivation as well as providing it.

This week, a client was my motivator. She had an aggressive periodontal condition and it took several sessions of root surface debridement and a lot of good home hygiene to get her stabilised. When she first attended, as is common with active periodontal cases, she was suffering from a strong oral malodour. She had not mentioned it in her initial interview, and, as she was already motivated to improve her oral health, I chose not to mention it. In this incidence, it was not necessary to use it as leverage.

This visit was for her maintenance appointment and was booked on a particularly busy afternoon and she was my last client of the day. I had just seen three demanding patients in a row, which had left me a little drained and I was conscious of running late.

I carried out the usual run through of the medical history, dental health, stress levels, oral-hygiene routine and was seriously considering skipping a bleeding score and not disclosing for a plaque score to make my life easier.

Then my patient said that she just wanted to thank me for everything. She was so pleased that I had helped her to stabilise her disease, but was most pleased that the bad breath had gone. She and her friends had been aware of the odour and it had affected her social life quite badly. She had stopped going on dates and avoided large groups where she would need to be close to someone to be heard. She was a receptionist in a large office and she felt self-conscious most days.

Since our completion of initial treatment, she has been speed dating, has joined a dating agency and is enjoying her social life again. She felt this was largely due to the treatment I had carried out and she just wanted to let me know what a difference I had made in her life.

I went from being a shrivelled husk of a hygienist rushing to get home, to bursting with energy and enthusiasm. I may even have had a wee tear in my eye. Needless to say I did do that bleeding and plaque score and she was doing well.

Realistically, most clients are busy and although they appreciate what we do, they might not have the time or the notion to boost our motivation by saying thank you.

One way to help keep your care consistent for your clients is to work out what will be involved in an appointment with you. Will you always disclose? (I would say yes to that). What about pocket charting? Once a year? Anything over 4 mm measured each visit? There is no end to the information we can document, but there is an end to the appointment.

In our practice, we use a protocol system so we have a clear guide to how we care for the patients. This helps us to monitor the quality of care we give our patients.

Whichever method you chose, remember that you are human. It's all right to lack enthusiasm sometimes, but we still need to deliver a quality level of care. That is what makes us professionals—and great ones at that.

(Mhari Coxon is a dental hygienist practising in Central London and chairman of the London British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT). She can be reached at mhari.coxon@cpdfordcp.co.uk). DT

Dentists not prone to suicide

Dr Jerry Gordon
United Kingdom

We tend to believe that among all the stressful professions in the world, it is dentists who have the highest suicide rate. Many people feel stress when they go to the dentist, and it is only logical to assume that the dentist must also feel the end result of all of that stress. Not to mention listening to all of the patients who say, "No offense, but I hate the dentist!" You may be surprised to learn that there is little evidence that dentists are more prone to stress-related suicides than the general population, according to an article in the June 2001 issue of the *Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA).

When a myth is repeated enough times over a long period of time, it begins to be accepted as the truth. "Since 1933, both the public and professional media have repeatedly portrayed dentists as being suicide prone," said Roger E. Alexander, D.D.S., professor, Baylor College of Dentistry, The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center, Dallas. Over the past twenty years, there has been little attempt to verify this claim. There are however, valid statistics on this important public health issue. According to the Centers for Disease Control, suicide took the lives of 30,575 Americans in 1998 (11.3 per 100,000 population), and more people die from suicide than from homicide. In 1998, there were 1.7 times as many suicides as homicides, and overall, suicide is the eighth leading cause of death for all Americans, and is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15–24. Although there is no shortage of statistic on suicide, there appears to be no evidence that dentists are at any higher risk than the general population, according to the journal's study.

While I won't argue that dentistry can be stressful at times, I think it's fair to say that people in any occupation can feel stress while working. It is also important to point out that it is mental disorders (particularly depression and substance abuse), not stress, that are associated with more than 90 per cent of all cases of suicide. Suicide among dentists, physicians and other health care professional is a serious issue because we are given the responsibility of caring for others. Fortunately, recent research has not confirmed a high suicide rate among dentists. DT

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All clinical pictures by Dr. Yamada

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Scientists learn about diet of ancient people from dirty teeth

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, DC, USA: Thanks to poor dental hygiene, researchers are gaining a more detailed understanding of what people ate thousands of years ago in what is now Peru. Dental plaque scraped from the teeth of people who lived as much as 9,200 years ago revealed traces of cultivated crops, including squash and beans, according to a report in the latest online edition of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

These ancient people also ate peanuts and a local fruit known as pacay, according to the report by Dolores Piperno, a staff scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and the National Museum of Natural History, and Tom Dillehay, Professor of Archaeology at Vanderbilt University. They studied 39 teeth from six to eight individuals. Found in northern Peru's Nanchoc Valley, the teeth were uncovered in the remains of round, house structures in a settlement dated to 9,200 to 5,500 years ago.

"Some teeth were dirtier than others. We found starch grains on most of the teeth. About a third of the teeth contained large numbers of starch grains," Piperno said in a statement.

The teeth study indicates that the diet of these people contained cultivated crops and was stable over time. In addition, some of the grains had been cooked, the researchers noted. They said they hope the future analysis of starch grains from teeth will lead to other findings about ancient people, perhaps showing a difference in diet between Neanderthals and early modern humans. DT

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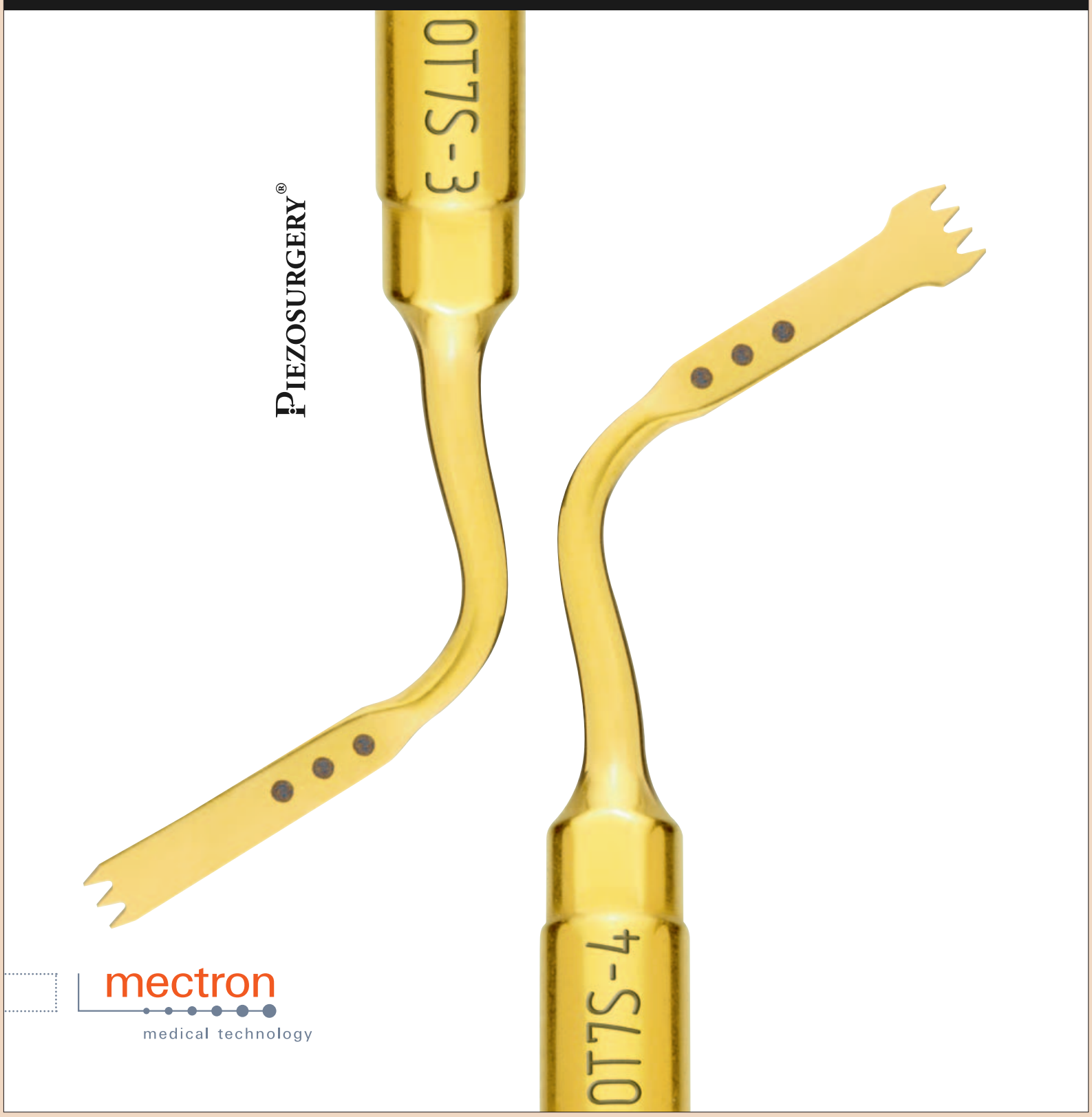


US cuts dental jobs

Reuters

NEW YORK, NY, USA: The United States suffered a grim roll call of job losses this month as a number of major manufacturing and service companies said they would slash costs to cope with the deepening economic crisis. The cuts come three days after government figures showed that US employers axed 533,000 jobs from payrolls in November, the most in 34 years, and that the nation's unemployment rate hit 6.7 per cent, the highest since 1993.

Economists expect the unemployment rate to rise to as much as eight percent by late next year. Jobs data for December looks to be bleak as Dow Chemical Co, the largest US chemical maker, said it would close 20 facilities, divest several businesses, and cut 5,000 jobs.

Others taking the scythe to their workforces included diversified manufacturer 3M Co, which said it would cut a total of 2,300 jobs in the fourth quarter. The company said it had already cut 1,800 of those positions and that it would cut another 500 in the fourth quarter. The job losses will occur mainly in the United States, Western Europe and Japan.

Danaher Corp, a US conglomerate whose products include Craftsmen tools and dental equipment, said it was eliminating 1,700 jobs, shuttering 13 facilities and freezing salaries.

The announcements came as the White House was reviewing a plan by Democratic lawmakers aimed at averting the collapse of automakers General Motors Corp and Chrysler LLC and saving 350,000 threatened jobs as the two companies face a cash squeeze.

President-elect Barack Obama, who will take office on 20 January, said the downturn demanded action to create new jobs, which economists say means a spending and tax plan of US$500 billion to US$700 billion.

Job losses in November were the steepest since December 1974, when 602,000 jobs were shed, and much worse than the consensus on Wall Street for a 340,000 reduction. DT

(Editing by Daniel Zimmermann, DTI)

No dental care costly for patients with diabetes

DETROIT, MI, USA: Overall medical and pharmacy costs in people with diabetes can be lower by more than 10 per cent per year in individuals receiving regular, non-surgical periodontal services. According to a study by the University of Michigan, USA, the same procedures were linked to as much as 19 per cent lower diabetes-related medical underscoring the importance of the link between medical and dental health.

"Working with the Michigan Blues, we found insured adults with diabetes in Michigan who receive routine periodontal treatment, such as dental cleanings and scaling, have significantly lower medical care costs than those who do not," George Taylor, the study's principal investigator and associate professor at The University of Michigan School of Dentistry, said. "The results of our analyses provide additional evidence supporting a beneficial role for periodontal treatment in improving overall health in people with diabetes and in lowering overall costs."

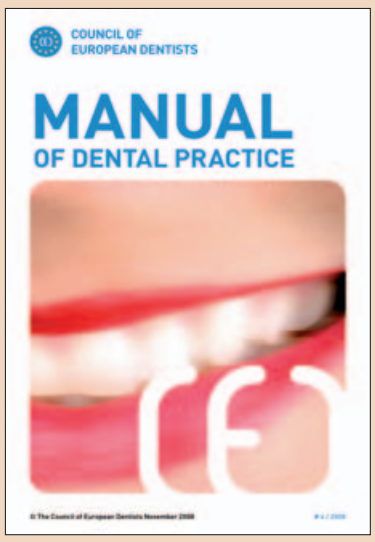
The study analysed five years of claims data from Blue Care Network, a Michigan-based Health Maintenance Organisation, and was funded by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation. The claims data pool consisted of 2,674 members with diabetes aged 18–64 with at least twelve consecutive months of medical, dental, and pharmaceutical coverage.

"Our belief is that research like this can have positive effects on the quality of care and cost of treating patients with diabetes," Dr Ira Strumwasser, executive director and CEO of the BCBSM Foundation, said. "This study demonstrates our effort to improve the health of all Michigan residents."

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation is dedicated to improving the health of Michigan residents by supporting health care research and innovative health programmes. DT

Revised manual for dentistry in Europe

BRUSSELS, Belgium: An updated guide on the training and work requirements for dentists and other dental professionals who want to practise in member states of the European Union has recently been published by the Council of European Dentists (CED). It describes the different legal and ethical regulations, dental training requirements, oral health systems, and the organisation of dental practice in 32 European countries, including Croatia, which is due to join the EU next year.



There has been considerable interest from dentists and government officials about the organisation of dentistry in the EU, and we believe this guide addresses all the professional issues that dentists need to take on board to make the move to practise in another country as hassle-free as possible," commented Dr Anthony S. Kravitz, main author of the 406-page manual.

The English edition is available for download on the CED website. French and German editions may be published at a later date, Council officials said. DT

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Align receives approval for Invisalign in Japan

SANTA CLARA, CA, USA: Align Technology, Inc. has announced the receipt of regulatory approval from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for marketing Invisalign, a method for treating misaligned teeth. The company said it would now begin widespread promotion in the country, where it has trained approximately 660 Invisalign orthodontists since launching the product there in October 2005.

"This regulatory approval in Japan is an important milestone and will enable us to engage in more traditional and expansive outreach activities to educate and support dental professionals with the necessary marketing activities needed to build the market for Invisalign in Japan," Gil Laks, vice-president of the company's international arm, stated. "In addition, we can now leverage the strength of the Invisalign brand by targeting prospective patients in Japan with consumer demand creation programmes," Laks added.

Align began its first commercial sales of Invisalign to orthodontists in the United States in 2002. Three years later, the company reported a manufacturing milestone of 15 million units per year. DT

SDG launches patient education videos on YouTube

SINGAPORE: Specialist Dental Group (SDG) has announced the uploading of its first patient education video on YouTube. The video is about the 'Teeth-in-an-Hour' implant procedure from Swedish Nobel Biocare and will also be available in a Bahasa Indonesia-subtitled version. SDG is the first dental practice in Singapore to release patient education videos online.

Unlike conventional dental implants, which require four to six months to complete, as time is needed for the implant to heal with the jawbone, the time frame is shortened considerably with Teeth-in-an-Hour implants. They are manufactured by Nobel Biocare, a global market leader in innovative aesthetic dental solutions and are particularly suitable for patients with multiple missing teeth. The overall time required from treatment planning to completion is two to three appointments over a period of two to three weeks, the company says.

"With Teeth-in-an-Hour implants, patients have teeth that feel like teeth, look like teeth and function like teeth," says Dr Neo Tee Khin, Consultant Prosthodontist at SDG. "This benefits our patients and really improves the quality of their life."

Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon at SDG, Dr Ho Kok Sen notes, "There is minimum bleeding, minimum trauma to the patient and the procedure is totally painless. The patient can immediately function after the procedure."

SDG is one of the largest multidisciplinary dental specialist groups in Singapore. The practice, which celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2009, has a strong foundation in dental implants. The clinic's founder, Dr Henry Lee, placed the first dental implants in Singapore over 20 years ago. DT

Asian companies are more prominent at International Dental Show

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

LEIPZIG, Germany: Dental companies from Asia will have greater representation in next year's International Dental Show (IDS) in Cologne in Germany. In addition to Korea, which will bring the largest number of exhibitors to the show, companies from Australia, China, India, and Taiwan have announced their participation.

Dr Martin Rickert, Chairman VDDI, Dr Markus Heibach, Executive Director VDDI, and Oliver P. Kuhrt, Executive Vice President Koelnmesse, (from left to right) at the European press conference in December, Photo: Koelnmesse.

At a recent European press conference in Cologne, representatives of the German dental industry rejected fears of economic cutbacks due to the ongoing financial crisis. Prospects for IDS 2009 look promising, they agreed. According to Dr Martin Rickert, chairman of the Association of German Dental Manufacturers (VDDI), there is still a steady demand for medical and dental services. However, the industry might be subject to short- or mid-term fluctuations, he said. "The dental market is an important part of the growing health care sector," Rickert said. "Due to our experiences from the past few years, we still expect people to invest heavily in their personal health. Financial considerations won't play much of a role here."

The 33rd IDS will take place from 24–28 March at the fairground in Cologne. Exhibitors have announced the introduction of a number of new products and services in growing sectors like implantology and prophylaxis to an expected 80,000 visitors from Germany and abroad. According to preliminary figures from the organiser Koelnmesse, more companies outside of Germany are expected to attend. A new navigation system is supposed to help visitors find exactly what they are looking for. Electronic tickets can be purchased in advance from the Koelnmesse online shop.

Germany, Japan, and the United States collectively dominated the global dental supplies market, with over 80 per cent share of sales in 2008. A recent report by Global Industry Analysts, Inc. has projected the overall market volume to exceed US$21.8 billion by 2015. The demand for dental products and services is predicted to remain healthy due to a growing demand in cosmetic treatments, new products that reduce patient discomfort, increased health consciousness, and dental implants. Growth in the conventional supplies category may be reduced because of emerging procedures and technologies that require fewer supplies and materials.

Although differences exist between dental markets within Asia, rapid improvement of living standards has recently induced greater realisation about the quality of medical and dental services in countries such as India and China. Consequently, these countries are exhibiting an increasing demand for modern and sophisticated technology and equipment. DT

IDEM Singapore 2008 wins coveted Approved International Fair Award

SINGAPORE: IDEM Singapore 2008, a leading dental show for the Asia Pacific region, was recently honoured at the Approved International Fair Awards, held at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel in Singapore. The award was given in recognition of the show's exemplary programme and contribution towards making Singapore a premier business travel and MICE destination.

The Approved International Fair (AIF) Award scheme is an official endorsement by the Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau for the quality of a trade fair, and the recipients are assessed according to a stringent set of criteria. The brand name is widely accepted in the international exhibitions industry as a benchmark of excellence, and it serves as a reference to foreign participants for choosing the most suitable events in the region at which to showcase their products and extend their market reach. Every year, the leading MICE industry players in Singapore contend to gain AIF status.

"We are honoured to be receiving this award for IDEM Singapore," said Michael Dreyer, vice-president for Asia Pacific of the organising company Koelnmesse. "Since 2000, IDEM Singapore has grown by 20 per cent every exhibition edition to become the leading dental show in the Asia Pacific region."

"We appreciate the support that our exhibitors, delegates and visitors have given us over the years. We will continue to strive for the highest quality, to meet the needs and expectations of our customers, by putting up an even better show in 2010," he added.

The next IDEM Singapore exhibition will be staged from 16–18 April 2010. The 2008 show occupied 10,000 square metres and showcased products from 384 exhibitors from 34 countries. DT

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