Dental Tribune

The World's Dental Newspaper · Asia Pacific Edition

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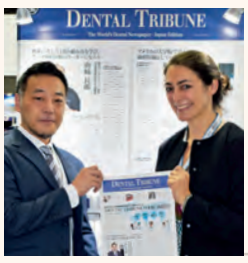

NEW EDITION

New: Dental Tribune International welcomes *Dental Tribune Japan*, which was introduced at the Tokyo Dental Show in November.

▸ Page 02

INTERVIEW

Dr Mikko Nyman about his new portal, QAdental, and how it aims to improve dental treatment in remote areas though shared information and consultation services.

▸ Page 09

LAB TRIBUNE

Read about the new Awrel Partner Portal, through which labs can offer their customers voice-guided ordering services for implants, supplies and equipment.

▸ Page 17

Blood pressure and periodontitis

By DTI

GUANGZHOU, China: Treatment of periodontitis significantly lowered blood pressure among Chinese patients at risk of developing high blood pressure, according to a preliminary study. The research was presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2017, a premier global exchange of the latest advances in cardiovascular science for researchers and clinicians.

The study compared blood pressure levels after standard and intensive treatment for periodontal disease among 107 Chinese women and men aged 18 years and over with prehypertension and moderate to severe periodontitis. Through random assignment, half of the participants received standard treatment and half received intensive treatment. One month after treatment, systolic blood pressure was nearly three points lower in participants receiving intensive treatment, but no significant difference was observed in diastolic blood pressure. Three months after treatment, systolic blood pressure was nearly eight points lower and diastolic pressure was nearly four points lower in the same patient group. Six months after treatment, systolic blood pressure was nearly 13 points and diastolic blood pressure almost ten points lower in these patients. "The present study demonstrates for the first time that intensive periodontal intervention alone can reduce blood pressure levels, inhibit inflammation and improve endothelial function," said study lead author Dr Jun Tao from the University in Guangzhou.

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In new research, intensive treatment of periodontitis was associated with a significant decrease in blood pressure among patients at risk of developing high blood pressure.

Long waiting times

DARWIN, Australia: Unreasonably long waiting times in public dentistry have been an issue in Australia for some time. Now, new figures disclosed in a senate estimates hearing in Canberra in October show that the problem worsened in most states in 2016, especially in the Northern Territory. Here, the waiting period increased dramatically from 30.8 months to 45.7 months—almost four years—in just a year.

According to a report by the *NT News*, the national average waiting time in 2016 was 12.05 months, with Victoria having the second longest wait in the country with 16 months and Western Australia the shortest with 2.5 months. Compared with the previous year, the figures show deterioration of the situation in most states. Waiting times increased in Victoria (from 12.77 to 16.01), New South Wales (from 12.92 to 14.20), the Australian Capital Territory (from 5.56 to 5.95) and South Australia (from 12.45 to 14.70).

© Modern Dental Group

Prof. Yu Guang Yan, Modern Dental Group CEO Godfrey Ngai and Prof. Thomas Flemmig (from left) kicking off a traditional dragon dance performance at the World Dental Forum in Beijing in China.

▸ News Page 07

Five million patients

Align Technology has announced that its five millionth Invisalign patient has begun treatment. "It's very rewarding to see how rapidly Invisalign treatment is growing around the world. I can't believe our first 'million' took ten years to achieve, while our fifth 'million' only took one year," said Joe Hogan, Align Technology President and CEO.

Anti-cariogenic herb

A research team from China and the Netherlands has found that extracts of the Chinese herb *Galla chinensis* demonstrated anti-cariogenic properties. The herb inhibited dental caries by favourably shifting the demineralisation/remineralisation balance of enamel and curbing the biomass and acid formation of dental biofilm.

Dental benefits

After plans to terminate the Australian Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) in 2016, the government finally decided that it was to be saved and increased efforts to raise public awareness of the benefits programme. Apparently, this has paid off. According to new figures disclosed by Department of Health official Mark Cormack, 859,714 children had utilised the CDBS by September this year. According to Cormack, this is a higher number than the same time last year, although he did not provide actual September-to-September data for comparison of the 2016/2017 period. In total, 1,036,920 children out of about 2.9 million made use of the CDBS in 2016, the figures further showed. In 2018, the scheme, which allows low-income families to claim a rebate of up to A$1,000 per child every two years for dental care, will be continued with minor amendments.

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Malaysia: Dental Bill 2017 proposes stricter regulation

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By DTI

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: Malaysia's new Dental Bill 2017, which had its first reading in Parliament on 27 November, will see significant changes made to the regulation of the dental profession and the organisational structure of the dental workforce. Among other measures, the bill aims to appoint the Malaysian Dental Council and the Malaysian Dental Therapist Board to control and regulate the profession. The existing dental council, established under the Dental Act of 1971, will consequently be dissolved.

Originally the intention was to only amend the Dental Act 1971, but due to the many amendments that were proposed, it was decided that it was necessary to table a new law altogether. The proposed bill allows for more effective regulation of dentistry, puts stricter disciplinary procedures in place for dental professionals and introduces fees and charges for registration and licensing.

Only accredited and registered dental surgeons, from both the public and private sector, who have been practicing as dental surgeons for at least seven years in Malaysia would represent the newly-proposed Dental Council. The council will have the power to approve or reject the registration applications of dental practitioners and specialists. The Dental Therapist Board will register and issue certificates to dental therapists and postgraduate dental therapists based on the conditions and restrictions of the new law and will be responsible for regulating the registration examinations and ethical and professional conduct of the professionals in the group.

The imminent revision of the regulatory framework comes as no surprise, as the country has seen a string of incidents related to fake dentistry practices and persons delivering dental services and treatments without valid licensing. In this regard, the Dental Bill 2017 aims to ensure the safety of dental patients and maintain high standards of dentistry in the country. The proposed law will also empower the council and the board to conduct disciplinary proceedings and impose punishment on their members who violate the conditions and terms that are set out in the bill, *theSundaily* reported. According to the news website, the current legislation does not allow for disciplinary action to be taken against illegal dentists or unregistered practitioners who work in registered practices.

While the Malaysian Dental Association (MDA) has welcomed the first reading of the new bill, the association has also raised concerns that stricter regulations might cause unwanted limitations to the profession, the *New Straits Times* reported. Therefore, MDA President Dr Ng Woan Tyng stressed that any clause that limits the freedom of practice of dentistry by the general dentist will reduce the accessibility of many dental procedures by the general public, especially in the rural areas, resulting in monopolies driving up prices. This may cause less-informed members of the public to resort to illegal dentistry that will ultimately endanger their health.

First Dental Tribune Japan issue

By DTI

TOKYO, Japan: Almost 20,000 visitors celebrated the latest in dentistry in Tokyo in November. Held at Tokyo Big Sight, the city's international exhibition centre, the Tokyo Dental Show featured more than 190 local and international manufacturers and dealers. Among the new products introduced to the Japanese market was the first issue of *Dental Tribune Japan*.

Together with Yoshimitsu Teraoka, representative of Dental Tribune International (DTI) in Japan, delegates from the company's head office attended the trade show not only to meet clients, but also to introduce DTI's new publishing partner in Japan, Medical Net. DTI and the listed Tokyo-based company officially joined forces already in July. In October, the first print issue of *Dental Tribune Japan* was launched, which reaches 20,000 dentists and 10,000 dental hygienists in Japan.

"Japan is the third-largest economic power in the world and there are many good dental companies in the country," commented Medical Net President and Chief Operating Officer Yuji Hirakawa. "We want to be a bridge between Japan and the rest of the world."

Atsushi Saito, Division Director Dental Tribune Japan, and DTI Business Development Manager Claudia Salwiczek-Majonek.

Complimenting the launch of the Japanese-language edition, DTI Business Development Manager Claudia Salwiczek-Majonek said: "Our partners here in Japan have not only published an outstanding first edition of *Dental Tribune Japan*, but also perfectly represented DTI at the Tokyo Dental Show. We are very proud to be partnering with Medical Net and have high expectations for the launch of our entire portfolio, including our www.dtstudyclub.com education platform, in this thriving and promising market."

Among the many other exhibiting companies that presented their products and services at the two-day event were Asahi Roentgen, Dentsply Sirona, GC, Ivoclar Vivadent, KaVo Kerr Group, Kuraray Noritake Dental, Lion, Mokuda Dental, Morita, Nishika, NSK, Osada, Planmeca, SHOFU, Sunstar, Takara Belmont, Tokuyama Dental, Tokyo Giken and Yoshida Dental.

At the show, two trends in dentistry were obvious. One was the ongoing advancements in the digital field, with ever-more precise dental tools, such as intraoral scanners, milling machines and devices for a digital workflow, showcased at the industry exhibition. The second indicated a longer-term transformation of the profession. While prevention and preservation have conventionally been a part of dentistry, there is an increasing shift towards these two aspects becoming the foundation of dentistry—not least owing to population ageing, a phenomenon especially prevalent in Japan. This change from mainly providing treatment to implementing a more holistic approach to oral healthcare was evident at the Tokyo event.

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Almost all Myanmar mouth cancer patients chew betel quid, study finds

By DTI

TOUNGOO, Myanmar: A study has found that almost all of the mouth cancer patients investigated used smokeless tobacco in the form of betel quid, researchers have reported at the European Society for Medical Oncology Asia 2017 Congress, held in Singapore from 17 to 19 November.

This observational study investigated the lifestyle behaviours of head and neck cancer patients that may have contributed to their disease. The cross-sectional study was conducted in the medical oncology unit of Toungoo General Hospital in 2016. All head and neck squamous cell carcinoma (HNSCC) patients who came to the hospital for treatment were included in the study. Participants were asked about their habits regarding betel quid chewing, smoking and alcohol consumption. Of the 307 cancer patients who visited Toungoo hospital that year, 67 (22 per cent) had HNSCC and were included in the study. Of those, 41 were male and 26 were female. The mean age was 59.2 years (range: 36–81 years) for men and 58.7 years (range: 19–86 years) for women. The most common cancer site was the oral cavity (34.3 per cent), followed by the larynx (25.4 per cent), oropharynx (11.9 per cent), nasopharynx (11.9 per cent), hypopharynx (10.4 per cent), lip (4.5 per cent) and nose (1.5 per cent).

Regarding lifestyle habits of the entire study population, 20 patients (30 per cent) chewed betel only; 19 patients (28 per cent) chewed betel and smoked tobacco; 19 patients (28 per cent) chewed betel, smoked tobacco and consumed alcohol. Two patients smoked tobacco and drank alcohol, two smoked tobacco only, two had none of the risk factors, and information was unavailable for three patients. All oral cavity cancer patients were betel quid chewers. In addition, 48 per cent smoked tobacco and 44 per cent consumed alcohol. The majority (87 per cent) of mouth cancer patients said they held betel quid in the buccal cavity most of the time.

Lead author Dr Khin Khin Nwe, a medical oncologist at the Toungoo General Hospital, said: "According to previous studies the incidence of oral cancer, also called mouth cancer, in Southeast Asia has been disturbingly high for many years. It has also been shown that smokeless tobacco use is common in this region—for example, in Myanmar more than 50 per cent of men use betel quid. Commenting on the topic, Dr Makoto Tahara from the National Cancer Center Hospital East in Chiba in Japan, said: "Given the number of health issues associated with chewing betel quid, particularly oral cancer and precancerous conditions such as leukoplakia and oral submucous fibrosis, understanding ways to reduce betel quid chewing is of global public health importance. In the last decade, betel quid has been classified as a group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer."

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Parrotfish tooth research may ring in new era of biomaterial development

By DTI

SINGAPORE/BERKELEY, USA: The achievements of science are evolving constantly. However, there are many natural wonders that humanity has not been able to mimic yet. Among these are parrotfish teeth, which are one of the strongest and most abrasion-resistant in the animal world. Investigating their structural make-up, a team of researchers has now determined the underlying properties that make the fish's teeth strong enough to even bite stony corals.

Parrotfishes are named for their unique dentition, which forms a parrot-like beak. Their teeth contain fluorapatite, which is among the stiffest and hardest biominerals known and can also be found in human teeth that have been exposed to fluoride.

"Parrotfish teeth are really good all-round biters of hard things, and few other teeth in nature are harder or stiffer," said lead author Dr Matthew Marcus from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California. To feed, the investigated steephead parrotfish *Chlorurus microrhinos* bite off corals and assimilate the organic material within it. To do so, these fish have two sets of teeth: one for biting corals and a pharyngeal set for grinding and chewing the bitten-off material.

Aiming to find out what makes the fish's teeth so resistant, the researchers first measured their mechanical properties in nanoindentation experiments. Afterwards, they performed chemical analysis with a variety of techniques, including scanning electron microscopy with energy-dispersive X-ray analysis and electron probe micro-analysis.

As reported by nanotechweb.org, the results showed that it is not the material of parrotfish teeth that is special, but the arrangement of the crystals of the teeth. Studying the structure, the researchers found that the enameloid nanocrystals co-orient and assemble into bundles interwoven like the warp and weft threads in fabric. The fibres gradually decrease in size from 5 µm at the back to 2 µm at the tip, and according to Marcus, it is this size decrease that makes the tooth structure so hard.

"The results also show that in nature, complex structures have evolved to carry out specialised extraordinary functions, like biting coral, using simple, unsophisticated materials," Marcus told nanotechweb.org. "Man-made materials, in contrast, usually do the opposite—that is, we use high-tech materials with a very basic structure."

According to the researchers, the techniques used in the study could be employed to study human bone and teeth more thoroughly and help in the development of new biomimetic materials.

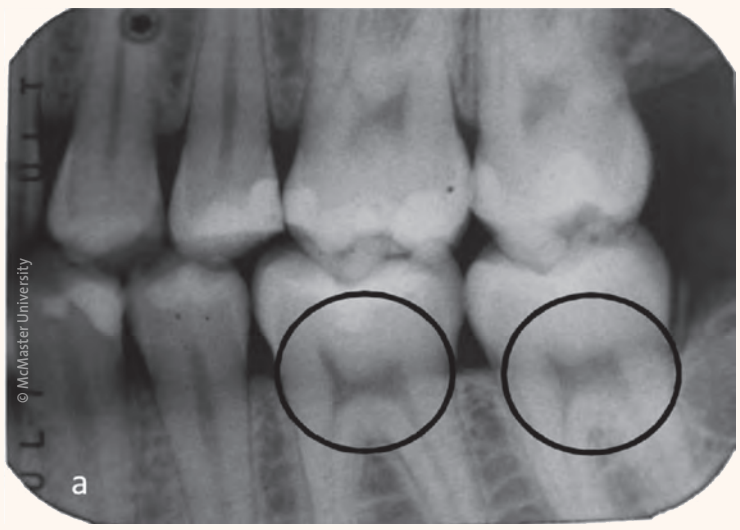
The study, titled "Parrotfish teeth: Stiff biominerals whose microstructure makes them tough and abrasion-resistant to bite stony corals", was published online ahead of print on 20 October in the *ACS Nano* journal.

Dental radiographs can reveal vitamin D deficiency

By DTI

HAMILTON, Canada: Human teeth hold vital information about vitamin D deficiency, and Canadian anthropologists have now found that this serious but often hidden condition can be detected on a simple dental radiograph. Identifying individuals who may have experienced vitamin D deficiency has significant potential for further understanding of the factors that may have compromised the health of people in the past.

McMaster University researchers Prof. Megan Brickley, Lori D'Ortenzio and their colleagues had previously discovered that human teeth hold a detailed and permanent record of serious vitamin D deficiency. This appears as microscopic deformities in dentine and can be extremely valuable for understanding precisely when people, even those who lived centuries ago, were deprived of sunlight, necessary for the body's production of vitamin D.



Radiograph showing vitamin D deficiency: Chair shaped, constricted pulp horns in the left first mandibular molar and a second mandibular molar (black circles).

The record is preserved by enamel, which protects teeth from breaking down, unlike bones, which are subject to decay. The problem with looking for such deformities is that a tooth must be cut open to observe the patterns that form a lifetime's vitamin D record, and the supply of post-mortem teeth available for study is limited.

To avoid wasting precious specimens, the researchers looked for a way to isolate teeth for further investigation. By using radiographs to study the readily observable shapes of the pulp horns, the researchers found a consistent, recognisable pattern that could prove helpful both to their studies of archaeological teeth, as well as to people who may not realise they are suffering from vitamin D deficiency.

The pulp shape in a healthy person's tooth resembles an arch topped by two cat ears, but in a person who has had a severe deficiency of vitamin D is asymmetrical and constricted, typically looking like the profile of a hard-backed chair.

D'Ortenzio and Brickley's previous research had suggested such a recognisable pattern, and their examination of both historic and current teeth proved that radiographic images are consistent and reliable indicators of prior deficiency.

"It was a real Eureka! It wasn't just that it looked different. It was different," remembered Brickley, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Bioarchaeology of Human Disease. "I think it's really important. It was a piece of work that aimed to look more at past individuals, but it has the potential to contribute to modern healthcare as well."

Since the consequences of vitamin D deficiency can be severe—especially in terms of bone health—knowing who has had a deficiency can help identify people who may have ongoing issues to prevent worse damage, the researchers said. If regular dental radiographs show a problem, blood tests can confirm whether there is a current deficiency.

Knowing more about ongoing vitamin D deficiency can also help to determine what is the best balance between protecting people from harmful UV rays and making sure they get enough sun to maintain a healthy level of the vital nutrient.

The study, titled "The rachitic tooth: The use of radiographs as a screening technique," was published online on 7 November in the *International Journal of Paleopathology*.

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"A truly open solution"

By DTI

At the Greater New York Dental Meeting (GNYDM), global dental imaging technology specialist 3DISC showcased its newly developed Heron IOS scanner. *Dental Tribune* had the opportunity to speak with Sigrid Smitt Goldman, CEO and Executive Chairman of the 3DISC group, about the company's entry into the intraoral scanner market and what sets the device apart from competing products.

After a two-year development process, you showcased the market-ready Heron IOS in New York. What were priorities in the development of the scanner?

The Heron's lightweight design and ability to update in real time make it an essential tool in the contemporary dental practice. In development, we focused on ergonomics for the dentist and comfort for the patient. Recognising that size and flexibility in scanning are essential, we developed a small, lightweight hand- and mouthpiece with a 360° rotating tip for maximum flexibility and comfort when scanning the upper and lower arches.

Were there any challenges you had to overcome in the development process?

During the development process, we took initial concepts to dentists early on in the design phase and were quite surprised to find that they had very different approaches to some basic things, like how they would pick the unit up. Some used a pen grip, others lifted it from the top. This feedback led to several changes to the shape of the unit and drove the design of the 360° rotating tip that allows the scanner to be comfortably held and used in every situation.

When will the device be available to customers and in which markets?

We open for sales in Europe and USA in the first quarter of 2018 and the first scanners will be in clinics early in the second quarter.

with solutions other than those of 3DISC too?

Yes, the scanner output is entirely open, providing both STL and PLY format, and expected to be compatible with most open dental CAD systems.

> "The 360° rotating tip allows the scanner to be comfortably held and used in every situation."

Sigrid Smitt Goldman, CEO and Executive Chairman of the 3DISC group, with the company's Heron IOS scanner during the 2017 Greater New York Dental Meeting.

Increasingly, dental manufacturers are introducing open solutions. Is Heron IOS compatible

Our QuantorClinic software is a combination of our own scan software and exocad's DB software, with dentalshare as the primary laboratory sharing tool. It facilitates order management, scanning, validation, commenting and order submission to the laboratory.

The Heron offers an all-in-one application accessible from one interface—a truly open solution with what we believe is one of the market's best-optioned CAD integrations.

Have you already planned any updates, such as introducing a wireless Heron IOS version in the future?

Naturally, the development of the solution does not end with the upcoming launch. We primarily expect updates on the software side, such as improvements to the free QuantorClinic software license that comes with the scanner. This means that dentists that order the first-generation software now will automatically get the updates with their software at no extra charge.

Editorial note: The scanner will be available to customers in Asia soon, a company representative told Dental Tribune. Currently, 3DISC is in the process of obtaining market approval for Heron IOS in China and Japan.

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Chinese market in focus at 2017 World Dental Forum in Beijing

By DTI

BEIJING, China: Held for the fourth time in 2017, this year's edition of the World Dental Forum proved to be a great success for its organiser, dental prosthesis provider Modern Dental Group. Bringing together over 800 dental professionals from around the world in the Chinese capital city, the event increased the exposure of the country's growing dental market by engaging local market players and dentistry experts.

Complemented by a small-scale exhibition, which was held alongside the congress programme, the two-day forum covered a broad range of topics in lectures delivered by a line-up of international speakers who mainly focused on industry developments in the fields of digital dentistry, implantology and aesthetic dentistry. The opening speeches were delivered by Prof. Thomas Flemmig, Dean of Dentistry at the University of Hong Kong, and the President of the Chinese Stomatological Association Prof. Yu Guang Yan, and were followed by traditional Chinese dance performances.

Commenting on the event's regional focus, Modern Dental Group CEO Godfrey Ngai said: "Founded in Hong Kong, and being one of the major global players who has strong presence in five continents, it is our obligation to contribute towards the Chinese market through education and introducing international standards."

Under Ngai, the Hong Kong-based company has extended its services to mainland China, training thousands of dental technicians and driving the development of the dental laboratory industry in China. Therefore, as part of the World Dental Forum's social programme, attendees had the chance to visit the Modern Dental Laboratory in Shenzhen, which employs over 4,000 technicians and is the largest state-of-the-art laboratory in the world.

According to Ngai, the company will continue to nurture the emerging Chinese market by delivering knowledge, technologies and skills to the country. "We are confident that in the near future, the Chinese market will grow and develop into one of the leading dental prosthetic markets in the world."

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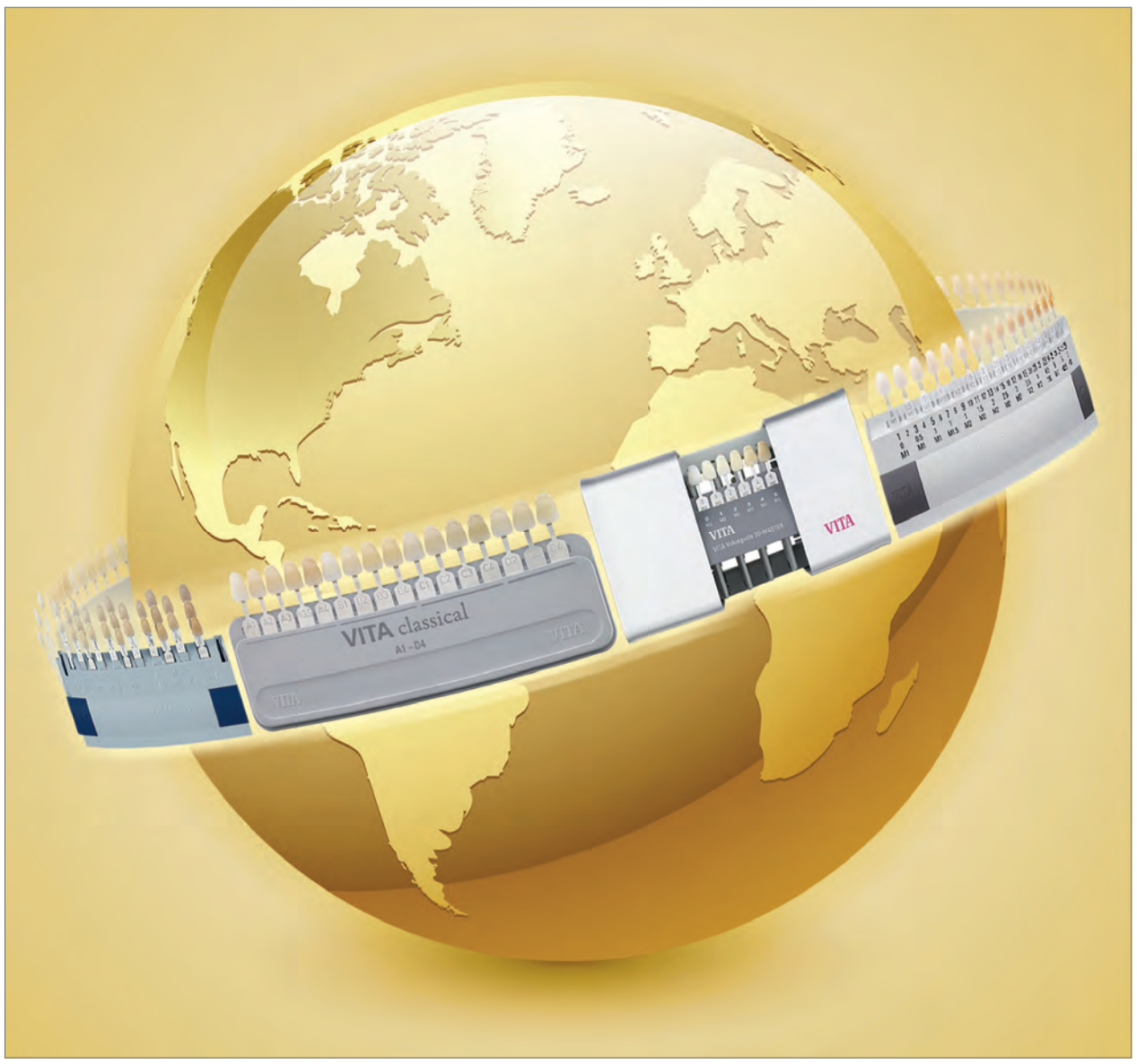

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Sophisticated solutions tailored for the Indian market

Fig. 1: Fast and lightweight: Planmeca's new intraoral scanner, the Planmeca Emerald was the focus of some of the product presentations.—Fig. 2: With a series of roadshows, W&H India and Planmeca India updated attendees on their latest product solutions.

> "[...] we offered an optimal platform for a lively exchange of experiences and know-how [...]."

By DTI

BANGALORE, India: Kicking off a series of events to increase their brand awareness in India, cooperation partners Planmeca and W&H have hosted exclusive roadshows in six of the country's metropoles. At the evening events that were specifically tailored to the demands of the Indian dental market, attendees had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the two companies' comprehensive product portfolios during interactive expert discussions and live demonstrations.

"Our aim was to maintain the direct contact with dentists, institutional heads as well as corporate hospital heads on site and to establish W&H India and Planmeca India as an important local partner for advanced dental solutions," said Raghavan Radhakrishnan, General Manager of the companies' joint office in Bangalore, which was officially opened in April.

Radhakrishnan announced that the roadshows were just the start of their broader action plan for the country's dental market. Inviting dental experts from all over India to be introduced to the latest solutions offered by the two family-run businesses, the roadshows were held in Chandigarh, New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Cochin and Bangalore from 8 to 14 November. According to the organisers, approximately 60–70 dental professionals attended each event, including dental specialists, such as implantologists, prosthodontists, oral surgeons and radiologists.

During the product presentations, special focus was placed on W&H's new implantology device Implantmed, an automatic handpiece maintenance device Assistina TWIN and the company's Primea Advanced Air Turbine. Planmeca highlighted its Planmeca Emerald intraoral scanner and the Planmeca PlanMill 40 S, a chairside CAD/CAM milling unit. After an introduction, attendees had the opportunity to experience and discuss the innovative functionalities of the products during hands-on demonstrations.

"The aim of our roadshows was not only to present our product innovations and our product know-how, but also to support active networking among the Indian experts. For our product success and brand awareness the personal contact to our customers and target groups is decisive," Radhakrishnan stressed.

"With the current series of events we offered an optimal platform for a lively exchange of experiences and know-how, which offered an added value for the daily practice to the participants."

J. Morita to distribute TRIOS in Japan

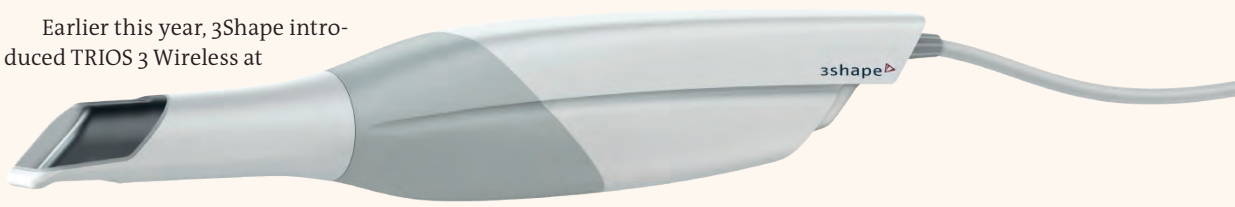
By DTI

TOKYO, Japan: Starting in spring 2018, J. Morita will distribute Danish digital solutions provider 3Shape's award-winning TRIOS 3 intraoral scanner as part of its line of dental products in Japan, the two companies announced in November.

"The 3Shape TRIOS 3 is renowned for its documented high accuracy and amazing speed. J. Morita's expert sales teams and strong service network make them an excellent partner for Japanese doctors seeking a smooth entry into digital dentistry," commented Hiroyuki Nishiya, 3Shape Country Manager for Japan, on the agreement.

Since its launch in 2011, the TRIOS range has received numerous awards. In October, the device was given the 2017 Cellerant "Best of Class" Technology Award for the fifth consecutive year in recognition of its accuracy, scanning speed and ease of use.

Earlier this year, 3Shape introduced TRIOS 3 Wireless at the International Dental Show in Germany. This device is the latest model in the TRIOS portfolio and the only wireless digital impression solution on the market. The newest model links to a PC via a point-to-point wireless connection to eliminate the need for cables in the operatory.



“Advanced knowledge and a supporting community via the Internet”

An interview with Dr Mikko Nyman, developer of new dental consultation portal QAdental

QAdental is open to all dental professionals globally and membership is free. – Dr Mikko Nyman at the 2017 Finnish Dental Congress and Exhibition in Helsinki.

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By Benito Gründer, DTI

In November, QAdental won the Innovation Award at the Finnish Dental Congress and Exhibition in Helsinki. Developed by Dr Mikko Nyman and Teddy Grenman, Chief Dentist and Chief Engineer at NUOVO NORDIC Healthcare Services, respectively, the platform offers dental professionals the opportunity to e-consult with dental specialists, serves as a database for learning material and patient cases, and enables forum discussions. *Dental Tribune* spoke with Nyman about this pioneering solution and the expertise it brings to remote areas and developing countries.

Congratulations on winning the award. How did this come about?

This has been quite a year. We piloted QAdental in Namibia this spring. It wasn't easy to obtain permission from the local ministry of health and it wasn't easy to get people excited about something totally new. We visited the country twice. However, we managed to conduct the pilot successfully.

Did you have a team to support you in the development process?

QAdental was developed by a team. Teddy Grenman and I were the main architects, but without the rest of the team—CEO Jani Korpela, Chief Medical Officer Jarkko Saramäki and Project Coordinator Teemu Tanninen—we wouldn't have been able to conduct the pilot successfully in Namibia. Steve Jobs's famous quote applies to QAdental also: “Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people.”

Did you expect to win the award?

We knew that big Finnish players such as Planmeca and Hammasväline would take part in the contest with their new great, innovative products, but we were quite sure that there were not many service providers who would be taking part, so we made the decision to participate in the contest. Certainly, we didn't expect to win. We didn't even have any marketing material ready. We built QAdental based on the [Eric Ries's] lean start-up principles. Validated learning was and will be the base for our development process.

How do the features of QAdental help practitioners in particular?

In Finland and many other countries, specialist services are not available in remote areas. This means dental professionals located there are obliged to work beyond their scope. QAdental brings to them advanced knowledge and a supporting community via the Internet. This way, clinicians can perform more challenging procedures more safely and discuss patient cases with their peers. The growing international database of questions and answers and learning material is available for all members. With the help of the advanced search function—or maybe artificial intelligence in the near future—clinicians may find answers to their questions from previous questions and answers.

What sets QAdental apart from other dental community platforms?

This kind of consultation or support service might be very significant in enhancing patient safety and healthcare quality. Our plan was to export Finnish or Western expertise to developing countries. One challenge was that these countries cannot afford to pay for Western dental specialist consultation. That's why we wanted to develop a way to share the knowledge. The solution was quite obvious: we had to create a place where all consultations, answers and learning material are available for all members so that the learning experience wouldn't be limited to one person.

During the pilot project, we learnt that there's a need for specialist e-consultations also in Finland, especially in remote areas. In Finland, there's no tele-consulting platform where information and learning experiences are shared with several practitioners at the same time, so QAdental serves as a kind of reverse innovation when it comes to Western countries. Compared with other dental forums, QAdental focuses solely on consultation and learning material. There's always a dentist on duty taking care of maintenance, and to make sure that the appropriate QAdental professional answers to the corresponding consultations. The officer on duty is also the quality controller when it comes to official answers.

Will your product be globally available?

QAdental is open to all dental professionals globally and membership is free. Dentists can register at www.qadental.com.

Thank you very much for the interview.

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