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## Sindh Revenue Board cracks down on tax evasion in cosmetic & dental surgery sector

KARACHI: To curb tax evasion and enforce compliance under the Sindh Sales Tax on Services Act, 2011, the Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) has launched a crackdown on cosmetic and plastic surgery providers, including dental and aesthetic surgery clinics operating across the province.

In a strongly worded notice, the SRB highlighted widespread violations and non-compliance among service providers falling under Tariff Heading 9842.0000, which covers "Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery and Transplantations".

Key issues highlighted by SRB:

- Suppression of taxable services
- Non-issuance of proper tax invoices
- Evasion of due Sindh sales tax

- Failure to e-file accurate tax returns

The notice further indicates that multiple businesses in this category — not just a single entity — are under scrutiny. Clinics providing



cosmetic dental procedures such as smile makeovers, veneers, dental implants, and facial aesthetic surgeries fall within this taxable bracket and are thus liable to pay

the applicable Sindh sales tax.

"Despite offering significant volumes of taxable services, many practitioners have failed to meet their tax obligations under the Act," the SRB statement reads.

The board has warned of strict enforcement actions, including:

- Deployment of SRB officials at non-compliant business premises
- Seizure and inspection of

business records

- Sealing of premises found violating tax laws

The SRB has already started sealing clinics and practices found non-compliant with the law.

Tax experts suggest that this move will have wide-ranging implications for aesthetic service providers, particularly in the dental implantology and cosmetic dentistry segment, which has seen exponential growth in recent years.

The SRB has urged all practitioners to:

- Issue proper invoices
  - File accurate tax returns
  - Ensure timely payment of due tax
- Failure to do so could invite penal actions, causing serious disruption to regular operations.

## PDA proposes collaborative solutions, urges SRB to halt direct notices to dentists

KARACHI: In response to the ongoing crackdown on tax evasion within the cosmetic and dental surgery sector, the Pakistan Dental Association (PDA) Karachi chapter held a pivotal meeting with the Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) to address concerns raised by dental professionals and propose collaborative solutions.

The meeting, held at the SRB head office, was attended by key PDA officials including Prof. Dr. Navid Rashid, President of PDA Karachi, and Dr. Wasif Ali, Chairman SRB, along with senior members from both organizations.

The agenda focused on simplifying SRB's registration and tax return processes for dentists, addressing practitioner concerns, and building constructive engagement between SRB and the dental community.

PDA Karachi urges simplification of SRB procedures

PDA Karachi raised the issue of complex registration and frequent issuance of notices, urging the SRB to consider easing procedures—particularly for small or single-chair dental practices. Prof. Dr. Navid

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## PDA Karachi, SHCC join forces to regulate dental clinics, curb quackery in Sindh



Key leaders from the Pakistan Dental Association (PDA) Karachi and the Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) unite for a strategic meeting to streamline dental clinic registration, promote clinical compliance, and combat quackery. —Photo: DT Pakistan

KARACHI: The Pakistan Dental Association (PDA) Karachi and the Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) have launched a strategic collaboration to enhance dental healthcare regulation in Sindh, focusing on dental clinic registration, practitioner training, and combating dental quackery.

High-level meeting to boost dental compliance

Led by PDA Karachi President Prof. Dr. Navid Rashid Qureshi, the delegation was welcomed by Dr. Ahson Qavi Siddiqi, CEO of SHCC. The meeting addressed critical gaps in dental health facility compliance and emphasized the importance of formal registration for dental clinics in Sindh.

"PDA will facilitate the registration process for dental facilities with SHCC to ensure regulatory alignment and improved public trust in dental services," Dr. Qureshi stated.

Key outcomes of the collaboration During the meeting, the following strategic initiatives were agreed upon:

- Streamlining registration for dental clinics across Sindh
- Joint training programs for registered dental health professionals
- Formation of a PDA technical committee to address:
  - Certification courses
  - Out-of-scope practitioners
  - Clinical compliance and licensing issues

This initiative demonstrates E-E-A-T (Expertise, Experience, Authority, Trust) as both institutions commit to elevating dental service quality and patient safety in the province.

Addressing dental quackery and public risk

Dental quackery remains a persistent threat to public health in Pakistan. SHCC's Director of

Anti-Quackery, Dr. Zubair Ahmed Soomro, emphasized the need for sustained efforts against unregistered and unqualified practitioners.

Dr. Ahson Qavi Siddiqi recommended proactive steps including technical oversight and public awareness campaigns, supported by PDA's outreach.

Stakeholder Presence

Notable attendees included:

- Dr. Aqeel Shaikh – Vice President, PDA Karachi
- Dr. Feroz Jahangir – General Secretary, PDA Karachi
- Dr. Tahera Ayab and Dr. Uzma Zareef
- Dr. Zainab Hasan – Director, DCGT
- Dr. Altaf Khawaja – Director, DLA

Their presence reflected a unified front in shaping ethical dental practices in Pakistan.

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## JMDC welcomes BDS batch 27 with a grand orientation ceremony

KARACHI: Jinnah Medical & Dental College (JMDC) proudly inaugurated its BDS Batch 27 with a grand two-day orientation session designed to foster motivation, instill discipline, and ignite academic ambition. The event drew full participation from the medical and dental faculties, showcasing the college's commitment to educational excellence and student-centered growth.

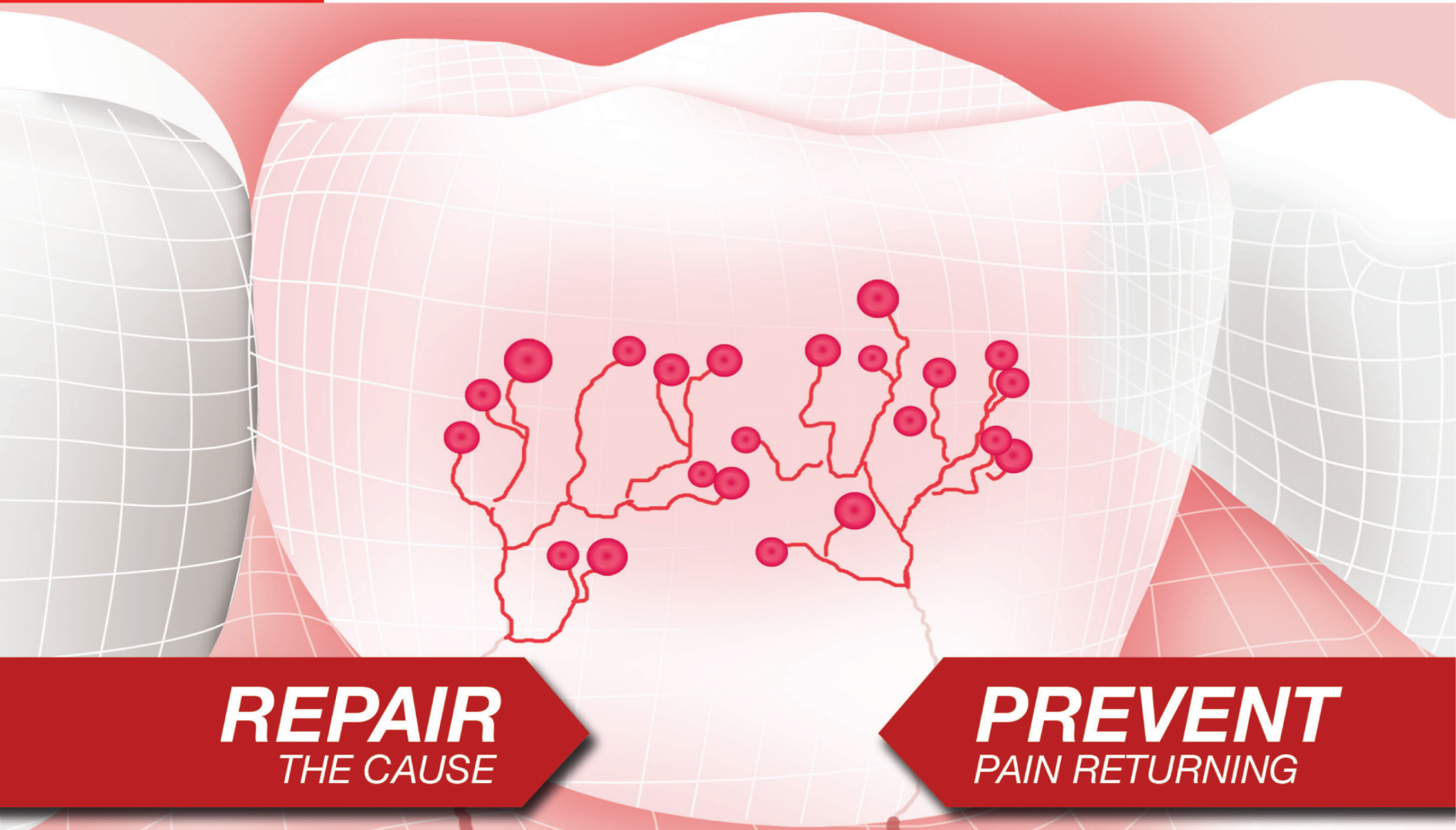
The orientation commenced with heartfelt welcome addresses by Dr. Fadieleh A. Sohail, Principal of the Medical College, and Prof. Dr. M. Junaid Lakhani, Principal of the Dental College. Both emphasized the significance of ethics, dedication,

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A memorable moment as JMDC's faculty and the bright new faces of BDS Batch 27 come together to celebrate the start of an inspiring academic journey. The grand orientation ceremony marks the beginning of a path filled with knowledge, ethics, and service to humanity. —Photo: DT Pakistan





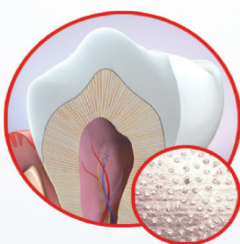
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‡ vs. toothpastes with 5% potassium nitrate. For instant relief, apply directly to the sensitive tooth and gently massage for 1 minute.  
Reference: 1. Li Y et al. J Clin Dent. 2011; 25(Spec 10):113-120. 2. Nishio S et al. J Clin Dent. 2009; 23(Spec 10):123-130.  
3. Ayat F et al. J Clin Dent. 2009; 23(Spec 10):103-105. 4. Ayat F et al. J Clin Dent. 2009; 23(Spec 10):115-122.  
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# Bhitai Dental & Medical College welcomes new BDS students with inspiration and vision



New Beginnings with Applause: BDS freshmen at Bhitai Dental & Medical College, Mirpurkhas, enthusiastically cheer as speakers deliver inspiring messages during the official welcome ceremony. –Photo: DT Pakistan

MIRPURKHAS: Bhitai Dental & Medical College, Mirpurkhas, proudly organized a special welcome ceremony for its newest batch of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) students, marking the start of a promising

academic journey in the field of dentistry and healthcare.

The event created an atmosphere of pride and motivation as senior leadership and academic faculty shared powerful messages of guidance,

support, and vision.

Inspirational speeches were delivered by:

- Dr. Arhama Surwaich, Principal
- Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Khan, Deputy Managing Director

- Dr. Zulfuqar Yousufani, Chief Executive Officer

- A special video message by Dr. Ghulam Mustafa, Managing Director

To further guide students and their families, informative academic presentations were led by:

- Dr. Ali Maqbool, Associate Dean & Director of Health Professions Education (HPE)
- Dr. Naresh Kumar, Director Academic

The event was made successful with the support of the IT and Marketing team led by Dr. Faizan-ur-Rehman Burki, and the Student Affairs team led by Dr. Bisma Khizer.

Students and their families were visibly excited and engaged, setting the tone for a dynamic and academically driven year. This event reflects Bhitai College's dedication to student empowerment, educational excellence, and community-building in Pakistan's healthcare education sector.

## Dr. Abdul Bari Memon Promoted to Professor at BADC

LARKANA, SINDH: Dr. Abdul Bari Memon has been officially promoted to Professor (BPS-21) and Chairperson of Community Dentistry at Bibi Aseefa Dental College (BADC), Larkana – a proud constituent of SMBBMU.

A respected academic and PhD holder in Community Dentistry from LUMHS, Dr. Memon was selected through the University Selection Board and now serves as a regular faculty member in his department.

With 10+ impact factor publications and a portfolio of national & international research, he's not just a professor—he's a powerhouse of knowledge and inspiration for future dental professionals!

Dr. Memon's passion for public oral health is unmatched. From rural awareness programs to school health seminars and oral health surveys, his community outreach efforts are changing lives in Larkana and beyond.

Join us in congratulating Dr. Abdul Bari Memon for his well-deserved promotion and unwavering commitment to education, research, and community service.



In this image featuring the Bibi Aseefa Dental College (BADC), Larkana, an inset photograph shows Dr. Abdul Bari Memon (right) being warmly congratulated by a colleague on his promotion to Professor and Chairperson of Community Dentistry. –Photo: DT Pakistan



# Altamash Dental Institute hosts advanced implant loading workshop

KARACHI: The Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine (AIDM) held a high-level Implant Loading Workshop in collaboration with Dynamark International and Izen Implant, empowering students with real-world skills in prosthetic implantology and clinical implant loading techniques.

Led by Dr. Naseer Ahmed, a prominent figure in implant dentistry, and Shamim Ashraf, the workshop focused on evidence-based techniques and the latest advancements in prosthetic connections, loading protocols, and functional rehabilitation of dental implants. Their combined experience and leadership established an ideal learning environment for both emerging dental professionals and senior students.

Key highlights from the implant loading training

Participants benefited from a structured program that included:

- Live demonstrations of immediate and delayed implant loading
- Step-by-step guidance on prosthetic integration



Dr. Naseer Ahmed (center left) and Shamim Ashraf (center right) guide dental students through practical implant loading exercises during an advanced workshop at Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine (AIDM), empowering participants with evidence-based techniques and real-world clinical skills in prosthetic implantology. —Photo: DT Pakistan

and Izen Implant, both recognized for their innovation and support in prosthetic systems, brought cutting-edge implant technologies and resources to enhance the workshop's impact.

According to the organizers, these collaborations are central to AIDM's broader mission: producing competent professionals aligned with international dental standards and capable of contributing to oral health innovation across Pakistan.

- Occlusal considerations for long-term implant success

- Maintenance and patient aftercare strategies

This immersive workshop served as a vital bridge between theoretical knowledge and clinical execution, aligning with global best practices in implant dentistry.

Advancing clinical education through strategic partnerships

The session emphasized the role of strategic industry collaboration in advancing dental education in Pakistan. Dynamark

## Dr. Amna Farrukh approved as supervisor for Orthodontics Residency at Hamdard University

KARACHI: Dr. Amna Farrukh, a renowned dental professional with a proven track record in both clinical practice and education, has been recently approved as a supervisor for the orthodontics residency program at Hamdard University Dental Hospital. This marks a major milestone in her career and a significant contribution to the growth of postgraduate dental education in Pakistan.

A graduate of Karachi Medical and Dental College (KMDC), Dr. Farrukh completed her Fellowship in Orthodontics (FCPS) in 2000, demonstrating early on her expertise and dedication to the field of dentistry. In her pursuit of further professional development, she also earned a Master in Health Professions Education (MHPE) in 2023 from Aga Khan University, enhancing her ability to teach and mentor future generations of dental professionals.

Dr. Farrukh's recent approval by the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) to supervise the orthodontics residency program at Hamdard University is a testament to her commitment to excellence in dental education. This initiative will play a key role in enhancing the quality of postgraduate orthodontics education at the institution, providing students with expert guidance and the clinical expertise they need to excel in their careers.

By becoming a supervisor for the residency



Inset: Dr. Amna Farrukh, recently approved by CPSP as a supervisor for the orthodontics residency program, brings her clinical expertise and academic leadership to Hamdard University Dental Hospital—strengthening postgraduate training and shaping the future of orthodontic care in Pakistan. —Photo: DT Pakistan

program, Dr. Farrukh will help shape the next generation of orthodontists, imparting her knowledge and experience to aspiring professionals who will go on to make their own impact on the dental field. This new role underscores her ongoing commitment to advancing orthodontic education and fostering a high standard of care in Pakistan's dental community.

Dr. Farrukh's leadership in both clinical practice and education continues to inspire her colleagues and students alike, and her new position at Hamdard University is set to further strengthen the postgraduate training available to dental specialists in the country.

## Margalla College of Dentistry holds first white coat ceremony for BDS class of 2029

RAWALPINDI: Margalla College of Dentistry celebrated a significant chapter in its academic timeline with the first-ever White Coat Ceremony, held on April 15, 2025. The event marked the formal induction of the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) Class of 2029, symbolizing their entry into the world of professional healthcare.

What the white coat ceremony represents

The White Coat Ceremony is more than a formal event—it's a rite of passage. Globally recognized in medical and dental education, the white coat signifies a transition from a student to a clinician, committed to the highest standards of ethics, compassion, and clinical excellence.

At Margalla College, this tradition now begins a legacy of professionalism and integrity for every dental cohort to follow.

A ceremonial beginning rooted in values and vision

Set amidst the lush green lawns of the college, the event venue featured elegantly arranged canopies, blending aesthetics with hospitality. The proceedings began with the recitation of the Holy Quran and blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), grounding the event in spiritual reverence and tradition.

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# FJDC conducts free oral health camps for 500 children in Korangi

KARACHI: In a commendable step toward community healthcare, the Department of Community Dentistry (CD) at Fatima Jinnah Dental College (FJDC) organized a four-day oral health campaign from April 14–17, 2025, targeting underprivileged schoolchildren in Karachi's Korangi district.

Led by Prof. Dr. Hussain Askary (CEO & Head of CD – FJDC), alongside Dr. Wajiha Anzar, Dr. Hannah Emmanuel, Dr. Fatima Khan, and Dr. Wasif Askari, the initiative mobilized 80 second-year BDS students, aiming to improve oral hygiene, prevent dental disease, and raise awareness on oral health among youth in areas with limited access to dental care.

Over 500 children received free dental screenings, personal consultations, and educational material during the camp. The students were taught proper brushing techniques, the importance of oral hygiene, and how dietary choices impact dental health. Interactive awareness sessions made learning engaging and memorable for the young participants.

This outreach served a dual purpose—it not only benefited children but also offered FJDC students real-world clinical experience. The



A glimpse into the four-day oral health campaign organized by Fatima Jinnah Dental College, where over 500 children from Korangi received free dental screenings, education, and dental care kits. Led by dedicated faculty and second-year BDS students, this initiative not only enhanced awareness but also gave young minds the tools to build lifelong healthy habits.—Photo: DT Pakistan

participating BDS students practiced dental evaluations under supervision, improving their clinical judgment, communication skills, and community responsibility.

By targeting children during their formative years, the campaign encouraged lifelong oral care habits. Parents and teachers also engaged

with the team, helping extend awareness to families and communities.

Given its overwhelming success, FJDC plans to expand oral health programs across Karachi's low-income neighborhoods, reinforcing its commitment to preventive dentistry and inclusive healthcare.

## PDA Lahore celebrates white coat ceremony for BDS students at de'Montmorency College



LAHORE: The prestigious White Coat Ceremony for the newly inducted first-year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) students at de'Montmorency College of Dentistry, Lahore, was a momentous event marked by a display of dedication, professionalism, and the spirit of lifelong learning in the field of dentistry. This ceremonial event was attended by key figures from the Pakistan Dental Association (PDA) Lahore, including Dr. Tahir

Mahmood (President, PDA Lahore) and Prof. Dr. Nadia Bhutta (Honorable Member, PDA Academic Wing), whose presence added to the event's significance.

The White Coat symbolizes the beginning of a dental professional's journey, representing their commitment to compassionate care, medical ethics, and the pursuit of excellence throughout their careers.

The PDA Lahore delegation,

including Dr. Tahir Mahmood and Prof. Dr. Nadia Bhutta, played an instrumental role in attending this inspiring event, recognizing the immense dedication and effort required to pursue a career in dentistry. Their participation was a testament to the PDA's ongoing support for advancing dental education and promoting the values of professionalism within the field.

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## Altamash Institute hosts advanced dental implant workshop for skill enhancement

KARACHI: The Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine (AIDM) recently concluded a comprehensive dental implant workshop in Karachi, Pakistan, offering invaluable clinical exposure to undergraduate and international students. Focused on dental implant placement training, the program emphasized hands-on experience—a critical factor in building surgical confidence and implantology expertise among emerging dental professionals.

This intensive workshop aligns with global standards in dental education, further strengthening AIDM's reputation for delivering evidence-based, skill-centric learning.

High-impact collaboration with implantology leaders

The training was powered by industry partnerships with Dynamark International and Izen Implant, two globally recognized leaders in innovative implant systems. These collaborations provided access to the latest implantology tools, technologies, and

*Continued on page 10*



# Altamash Institute hosts IDRP Pakistan Orientation: Pioneering dental research in 2025

KARACHI: The Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine (AIDM) has taken a bold step forward in advancing dental research in Pakistan by hosting the highly anticipated IDRP Pakistan Orientation Session. This event, part of the International Dental Research Program (IDRP), marks a transformative moment for Pakistani dental students and researchers, as it aims to build a bridge between academic excellence and international collaboration in dental research.

The IDRP Pakistan Orientation is a flagship initiative that offers Pakistani dental students unique opportunities to engage with global research networks. Under the leadership of Shamim Ashraf, Director of IDRP Pakistan, the orientation session served as a launchpad for empowering the next generation of dental researchers in the country.

The event was graced by key members of the AIDM leadership, including Prof Dr. Hasnain Sakrani, Principal of AIDM, Prof. Dr. Naseer Ahmed, Head of Research, Prof. Dr. Sheema Farhan, Vice Principal, and Prof. Dr. Ambreen Fazal, Dean of the institute. Their presence demonstrated



Shaping the future of dental research: Participants at the IDRP Pakistan Orientation hosted by the Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine. This event marks a key step in fostering international collaboration and empowering the next generation of dental researchers in Pakistan. —Photo: DT Pakistan

AIDM's unwavering commitment to nurturing a research-driven culture and fostering international collaborations in the field of dental research.

As a major milestone in advancing dental education and

research, the IDRP Orientation aimed to onboard new participants and inspire them to pursue research opportunities that will shape the future of oral health care. Shamim Ashraf emphasized the significance

of bridging the gap between clinical practice and research. The initiative is not only about contributing to local research but also about creating avenues for Pakistani dental students

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## FJDC goes international: Dr. Islam Kassem appointed Adjunct Faculty

KARACHI: Fatima Jinnah Dental College (FJDC) continues to advance its commitment to integrating international expertise into its curriculum with the recent appointment of Dr. Islam Kassem as Adjunct Faculty. A distinguished Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon and Aesthetic Physician, Dr. Kassem's appointment marks a significant milestone in FJDC's efforts to bring cutting-edge dental and aesthetic advancements to Pakistan.

This collaboration strengthens FJDC's international ties and reflects its dedication to offering students top-tier education, merging traditional dentistry with the latest innovations in aesthetic medicine.

Dr. Islam Kassem has an impressive academic and professional background. After earning his BDS from Alexandria Dental School in 2002, he specialized in Oral & Maxillofacial

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FJDC takes a significant step forward in dental education by appointing Dr. Islam Kassem as Adjunct Faculty. This collaboration brings international expertise in Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery and Aesthetic Medicine to FJDC, enhancing the curriculum with cutting-edge advancements. —Photo: DT Pakistan



# PDA opposes merger of de'Mont College, advocates for university upgrade

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Dental Association (PDA) has strongly opposed the proposed merger of de'Montmorency College of Dentistry with King Edward Medical University (KEMU) or University of Health Sciences (UHS), Lahore. Instead, the PDA has proposed that the college retain its academic independence and be upgraded to de'Montmorency University of Oral Health Sciences to ensure continued excellence and legacy in dental education.

The PDA's resolution clearly condemns the proposed merger, which would have merged the century-old institution into a larger university structure. According to the PDA, such a merger would compromise the autonomy of the college, which is an old and a highly respected entity in the field of dental education.

The PDA stresses that de'Montmorency College must maintain its affiliation with a university for academic purposes but must not lose its independent status. The association believes that the legacy and historical significance of the college are at risk if it is absorbed as a constituent college of a larger institution.

In lieu of the merger, the Pakistan Dental Association has recommended upgrading de'Montmorency College to the de'Montmorency University of Oral Health Sciences. This upgrade would not only preserve the college's esteemed legacy but also propel the advancement of dental education and research, ensuring its continued leadership in the field.



The de'Montmorency College of Dentistry, a cornerstone of dental education in Pakistan, stands as a symbol of academic excellence. The Pakistan Dental Association advocates for its upgrade to the de'Montmorency University of Oral Health Sciences, ensuring its continued independence and leadership in advancing dental education and research. —Photo: DT Pakistan

The PDA firmly believes that this upgrade will ensure that the institution remains a leader in dental education, attracting both local and international talent.

The Lahore's dental community has shown strong support for the PDA's stance. Local dentists, faculty members, and students have voiced their concerns about the potential merger. The dental community has a deep-rooted connection to the college, and there is widespread agreement that its independence is crucial to preserving the standards of dental education in Pakistan.

Dental Tribune Pakistan further reached out to PDA Lahore Chapter President Dr. Tahir Mehmood and Prof. Dr. Ayyaz Ali Khan, an active member of Lahore's dental community. Both leaders expressed their full support for the PDA Center's stance on the merger and pledged to collaborate with local legislators to table a resolution in the provincial assembly for the upgrade of de'Montmorency College to the de'Montmorency University of Oral Health Sciences. This effort is seen as a crucial step in preserving the college's autonomy and maintaining its esteemed reputation.

## University College of Medicine & Dentistry, UOL Lahore holds oath-taking ceremony for BDS 2025 students

LAHORE: The Oath-Taking Ceremony for the BDS 2025 students at University College of Medicine & Dentistry (UCD), UOL Lahore, was an inspiring event filled with pride and emotion. Held in the presence of proud parents, faculty members, and distinguished guests, this ceremony marked a significant milestone in the students' academic and professional journey. With excitement in the air, future dental surgeons took their solemn pledge under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Moghees Baig, the esteemed Dean & Principal of UCD, who emphasized the importance of upholding the highest ethical standards in the dental profession.

History and importance of the oath-taking ceremony for BDS students

The oath-taking ceremony for BDS students is a time-honored tradition that serves as the official entry into the world of dental practice. It symbolizes the commitment of future dental professionals to uphold the ethical standards,



Future dental professionals take their solemn oath at the University College of Medicine & Dentistry, UOL Lahore, marking the beginning of their journey toward becoming compassionate and ethical dental surgeons. —Photo: DT Pakistan

compassion, and care that are at the heart of the dental profession. The practice of taking an oath dates back centuries and is a pivotal part of medical and dental education across the world. The ceremony signifies a formal commitment to the values of patient care,



integrity, and professionalism, ensuring that students understand the gravity of their role as healthcare providers.

In many universities globally, including UOL, the oath-taking ceremony is more than just a formality; it serves as a reminder of the

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# TMJ disorders and clenching: The silent epidemic of dental compression syndrome

For decades, dental professionals have primarily focused on teeth grinding when diagnosing and treating temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders. However, a significant contributor to these disorders has been largely overlooked—clenching, now identified as Dental Compression Syndrome (DCS). While both grinding and clenching fall under the umbrella of bruxism, these two conditions differ fundamentally in their impact on the TMJ. In this article, we will explore the critical distinction between grinding and clenching, and why DCS is a far greater threat to joint health.

The link between clenching and TMJ disorders

TMJ disorders are a complex set of conditions affecting millions globally, causing pain, discomfort, and even damage to the jaw joint. Traditional focus has been on grinding, a horizontal force that is known to cause some degree of damage to the TMJ. Yet, clenching, or DCS, involves vertical forces that are much stronger and longer-lasting, making it far more damaging to the TMJ structure. These forces lead to microtrauma, inflammation, and eventual disc displacement within the joint.

While grinding results in the condyle gliding past the disc with reduced impact, DCS forces the condyle to compress the disc, causing significant stress. This misunderstanding and focus on grinding has led to ineffective treatments, such as occlusal adjustments and the use of dental guards, that fail to address the root cause: vertical pressure from clenching.

Why clenching is more dangerous than grinding

Vertical vs. horizontal forces:

Unlike grinding, which produces horizontal forces, clenching creates vertical forces that can exceed twice the intensity of grinding. These forces last much longer, causing significant wear and tear on the TMJ.



An X-ray highlighting the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), where clenching or Dental Compression Syndrome (DCS) exerts vertical forces, causing significant strain on the joint and its disc. —Photo: DT Pakistan

Impact on the disc:

Clenching leads to compression of the disc, which results in greater risk of disc displacement, a condition that causes severe pain and limited jaw movement. This distinction is critical for dental professionals in diagnosing and treating TMJ disorders effectively.

The misconception: Overlooking clenching in TMJ diagnosis

For years, clenching was not adequately recognized as a major contributor to TMJ disorders. Most dental interventions focused on the visible signs of grinding, such as flattened teeth or worn-down surfaces. However, DCS presents with different symptoms, such as tooth fatigue and muscle soreness, often unnoticed by patients. These signs were not associated with clenching until the 1980s, further delaying proper diagnosis and treatment.

DCS, unlike grinding, often occurs while awake and is typically subconscious. This

makes it harder for patients to identify and manage the condition. The onus, therefore, falls on dental professionals to recognize the symptoms and educate patients on managing this silent epidemic effectively.

The consequences of misdiagnosis: Teflon implants and FDA recalls

The failure to address clenching as a root cause of TMJ disorders has led to some drastic and harmful interventions in the past. For example, when disc displacement did occur, the dental community opted for symptomatic management by replacing damaged discs with Teflon-coated implants. Unfortunately, this led to significant complications, including a mass recall by the FDA after 25,000 implants were found to be ineffective, with one implant even migrating to a patient's brain.

This history underscores the importance of understanding the fundamental cause of TMJ issues and avoiding interventions that

merely mask symptoms rather than address the underlying problem.

Clenching's role in hard tissue deformation

Clenching also leads to noncarious lesions (NCLs), which are tooth deformations caused by the repetitive force of compression. These hard tissue deformations have been a source of debate among dentists for nearly a century, but recent advancements in understanding the mechanics of fatigue have provided clarity.

When subjected to repeated stress, such as clenching, the tooth structure becomes fatigued and begins to break down. This fatigue weakens the tooth material, leading to cracks and loss of tooth structure at focal points of high stress. This type of damage is often mistaken for wear from grinding but requires a fundamentally different approach to treatment.

Moving forward: How dentists can better address DCS

For dental professionals, recognizing DCS and its unique impact on the TMJ is critical for improving treatment outcomes. While sleeping dental guards may provide relief for grinding, DCS requires patient awareness and proactive monitoring. Educating patients on the signs of clenching during the day—such as jaw tightness or soreness—and implementing behavioral modifications is essential to preventing long-term joint damage.

Conclusion: The need for a paradigm shift in TMJ treatment

The recognition of Dental Compression Syndrome (DCS) as a primary factor in TMJ disorders marks a significant shift in how dental professionals approach diagnosis and treatment. By moving away from a focus on grinding and understanding the unique role of clenching, dental practitioners can provide better, more targeted care that addresses the root causes of TMJ issues and promotes long-term joint health.