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INTERVIEW

Dental Tribune had the opportunity to speak with Andrea Greer, who has been working in the field of dentistry for over 25 years about what can be done to improve business education for dentists.

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PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

In addition to knowledge, experience and the latest technology, communication is key in the success of a dental practice. In this issue, an expert talks about how to deal with grumbling patients.

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NO SCREWS, NO CEMENT

Case report about the fabrication of a fixed superstructure for the edentulous mandible that uses an innovative attachment system.

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HKIDEAS 2018 themed “New millennium of oral health”

By DTI

HONG KONG, China: Organised by the Hong Kong Dental Association, the Hong Kong International Dental Expo and Symposium (HKIDEAS) has established itself as one of the leading events in the field in China. Over time, HKIDEAS has continued to grow steadily to become an important meeting ground for the Chinese dental community. This year's HKIDEAS is starting on 24 August at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and will run until 26 August.

The scientific programme at HKIDEAS aims to introduce the latest trends in dentistry to its international audience and to discuss important topics that affect industry bodies, as well as dental professionals and their patients. Attendees can expect talks by key opinion leaders covering various fields, including aesthetic, implant and digital dentistry, across the three congress days. In addition, workshops



Envisioned as a platform for dental practitioners and researchers to exchange knowledge and skills in the field of dentistry, HKIDEAS is an important meeting point in Hong Kong. (Photograph: PaulWong/Shutterstock)

will be presented by dentistry experts in the various specialties.

HKIDEAS 2017 attracted more than 7,400 attendees from 37

countries. In light of that success, the organisers are confident that this year's event, offering abundant learning and networking opportunities, will appeal to even

more visitors. Congress attendees can download the HKIDEAS app to preview the list of speakers, create a personalised schedule, view the list of exhibiting companies.

More information about the event can be found at www.hkideas.org.

Researchers develop less destructive method to whiten teeth



Chinese researchers have made a promising discovery for a gentler tooth whitening procedure. (Photograph: REDPIXEL.PL/Shutterstock)

By DTI

NANCHANG, China: Social media adverts for whitening products show celebrities flaunting their pearly whites, putting pressure on consumers to conform to the ideal of white teeth. Patients can opt for over-the-counter or professional tooth whitening treatments, but both can harm the teeth. To com-

bat this problem, Chinese researchers have now developed a new, less destructive method.

As is commonly known, teeth can become discoloured with the consumption of staining foods and drinks. As a result, many people turn to non-invasive whitening treatments. Currently, the most common bleaching agent is hydrogen peroxide, but high concentrations can break down the enamel, causing sensitivity or even cell death.

Researchers and senior authors of a recent study Xiaolei Wang and Lan Liao, along with their colleagues at Nanchang University, investigated whether a different compound activated with blue light could act as a safer, yet still effective, alternative. The team modified titanium dioxide nanoparticles with polydopamine

(nano-TiO₂@PDA) so that they could be activated with blue light. In a proof-of-concept experiment, the particles were evenly coated on the surface of a tooth and irradiated with blue light.

After 4 hours of treatment, the whitening level was similar to that obtained with hydrogen peroxide-based agents. The researchers did not find significant enamel damage on the surface of the tooth, and the treatment was significantly less cytotoxic than hydrogen peroxide. In addition, the nano-TiO₂@PDA therapy showed antibacterial activity against certain bacteria.

The study, titled “Blue-light-activated nano-TiO₂@PDA for highly effective and nondestructive tooth whitening”, was published in *ACS Biomaterials Science and Engineering* on 19 June 2018.



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Survey reveals Australian dental product suppliers face rising costs

By DTI

CANBERRA, Australia: To allow manufacturers and suppliers of dental products to express their

level of business confidence in the industry, the Australian Dental Industry Association (ADIA)

conducts the Australian Dental Products Business Conditions Survey on a quarterly basis. Ac-

cording to the results of the most recent survey, there is an overall feeling that the industry

is facing some challenges, mostly due to rising costs.

"Businesses that supply the products used by dentists and allied oral healthcare professionals are facing challenges that range from rising electricity costs to higher prices associated with importing products from overseas. This doesn't diminish the dental industry's commitment to making available the latest innovations, it just means that the businesses have increased challenges," said ADIA CEO Troy Williams.

According to ADIA, the survey is a clear indicator that the Australian government needs to maintain its efforts to reduce bureaucratic hurdles. However, a new proposal by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for a tax on the supply of medical devices in

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Recent survey results have shown that dental product suppliers are facing a number of challenges, including rising import costs. (Photograph: jannoono28/Shutterstock)

the dental and medical industries may be doing the exact opposite.

Speaking about some of the positive aspects of the survey, Williams noted that the dental industry is growing, and the survey provides clear indication that businesses are employing more people. In addition, the survey revealed that large-scale trade shows such as ADX18 Sydney, Australia's largest healthcare trade show, can positively influence sales volumes. This result Williams said reinforces ADIA's commitment to providing the industry with "world-class trade shows".

Summing up the results of the survey, Williams went on to say "ADIA member businesses want to invest in their business and want to create jobs. This survey shows they are being challenged by rising business costs and that's why we need government to cut the red tape, which will lead to reduced compliance costs."

Researchers pinpoint mutations that give bacteria antibiotic resistance

By DTI



Antibiotic resistance is a growing major healthcare concern.
(Photograph: Sirirat/Shutterstock)

HOKKAIDO, Japan: The researchers, from Hokkaido University and the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, have developed an approach to systematically screen for resistant ribosomal RNA (rRNA) genes. rRNA is the indispensable part of the cell that creates proteins. It is one of the primary targets of antibiotics, but rRNA mutation is now a well-known route to resistance. That resistance has many healthcare professionals concerned. In a recently presented study at EuroPerio9 in Amsterdam, results showed that antimicrobial resistance is on the rise among German patients with severe periodontitis.

Dr Kei Kitahara, a molecular microbiologist at Hokkaido University and co-author of the current paper, said: "Our results suggest that there are many unfound and uncharacterised antibiotic resistance point mutations in rRNA genes."

In order for Kitahara and co-author Prof. Kentaro Miyazaki to arrive at this conclusion, they took rRNA from a wide range of bacterial species in the natural, or non-clinical, environment, where mutations are continually taking place. From there, the researchers were able to insert them into inactive *Escherichia coli* lacking in rRNA and found that more than 2,000 imported rRNA could compensate for this lack, thereby preventing the *E. coli* from dying. They then tested whether a common antibiotic, spectinomycin, effectively killed the bacteria or if the rRNA gave the *E. coli* resistance.

According to the study results, the screening found three previously unreported mutations in rRNA from the pathogens that resisted the antibiotic, along with other mutations that were already known. Although using inactive *E. coli* to test for mutations has been proposed before, this screening can analyse rRNA from other pathogens rather than just what is present in the *E. coli*.

The discovery by the researchers comes at a time when antibiotic research is becoming increasingly challenging. Earlier this year, the Star Tribune reported that Novartis, a Swiss multinational pharmaceutical company based in Basel, was the latest drug-manufacturing giant to announce it was shutting down its antibiotics and antiviral research programmes. According

to the article, a Novartis representative said the move would allow the firm to "prioritise resources in

other areas where we believe we are better positioned to develop innovative medicines".

The study, titled "Functional metagenomic approach to identify overlooked antibiotic resis-

tance mutations in bacterial rRNA", was published in *Scientific Reports* on 3 April 2018.

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“In order for a business owner to be an effective leader, he or she must delegate”

The idea that in this day and age dentists can keep the business side of the practice in-house is considered by some as no longer possible.

In this interview with *Dental Tribune*, consultant Andrea Greer reflects on how dentistry has changed, the most common business mistakes dentists make and what can be done to improve business education for dentists.



Andrea Greer has over 25 years of experience in dentistry and since 2013 has worked as a dental consultant and speaker. In an interview with *Dental Tribune Online*, she shares some of her experience and ideas about the business side of the industry. (Photograph: Brio)

In what capacity have you been working within dentistry?

I like to say that I fell into dentistry by accident! After moving from Washington state to Colorado without a job, a friend asked if I would be interested in training chairside as an assistant, and I jumped at the prospect of a paycheck! I fell in love with dentistry and immediately started prerequisites for hygiene school. Eventually, I transitioned into office management, and then software training and light consulting. Ultimately, in 2013, I achieved a long-term goal of becoming a full-time consultant for a well-respected national firm in the U.S. In January this year, I struck out on my own as a consultant and speaker, and I am loving it!

How do you think the business of dentistry has changed over the last two decades?

In a hundred ways! When I was practicing hygiene in Colorado, implant dentistry and integration of practice software and electronic health records were the frontier we were navigating. At that time, running a dental practice from within was completely manageable, and we had all the time we needed to stay on top of the systems we had in place. However, with time we have seen technology, student debt, patient expectation, science, materials, employee expectation, insurance, regulations, marketing, connectivity and work-life balance shift in drastic ways. I don't believe it is possible for a business owner to expect to keep it all in-house any longer. It is costlier, and there is a greater chance of mismanagement. I believe that, in order for a business owner to be an effective leader, he or she must delegate and outsource tasks and systems in the practice.

You have met with many dentists over the years. When it comes to the difficulties of running a business, have there been any recurring issues?

In so many practices, there is a lack of general understanding of putting systems in place and then creating a culture of accountability. Basic leadership skills are missing from our education system, so when a business owner is challenged with controlling the chaotic schedule or helping his or her team understand how to answer the phone, or even making

“I believe that there is a huge need for more business exposure in medical and dental education.”

sure that the money owed to the practice is collected, he or she does not know how to train and motivate the team to accomplish these tasks. And it is never just one thing! There are always multiple systems out of place and lacking, and it becomes overwhelming for dentists to try and implement successfully—they just want to practice dentistry! Eventually, chaos ensues, and all the systems fail. That's when I usually hear from a dentist.

How do you think practice owners would be best served in understanding what it means to run a business?

I believe that there is a huge need for more business exposure in medical and dental education. Almost every dentist that I have spoken to talks about the dental school experience having emphasized physiological systems and processes that are not critical to the day-to-day practice of dentistry; however, there is no discussion about how to understand a profit and loss statement, leadership, or the why behind creating and understanding the business figures. I am a part of a Facebook group led by a dentist who is on a mission to provide a taste of what it takes to run a practice for dental students and business owners alike. He told me once that he has

never seen a dentist lose his or her practice over a poor Class II composite restoration, but we have all seen practices flounder and fail because of poor customer service or because the dentist does not understand the overhead.

I have heard it said that the dental curriculum does not allow time for business education, although some have shared with me that this is an excuse to avoid change. Can a single semester (which is still not enough!) of basic dental practice business be so difficult to carve out? Or what if business courses were required as prerequisites for dental school? Help students understand basic economic principles for the self-employed, human resources do's and don'ts, etc. That would be a great start.

What are some of the most prominent business mistakes you have seen dental practice owners make over the years?

Waiting too long to ask for help. Often, the excuse for the new business owner is budgeting, and I completely understand that. However, carving out the means to pay for help early on will save the business owner so much money, time and headache down the road!

I have been around some of the best people in dentistry for de-

acades—consultants, speakers, teachers and writers. All of us have many, many testimonials from clients who recognized the benefit of getting help within a few years of starting their businesses and have been successful in implementing what they have been taught. And yet they often say they wish they had contacted us sooner. Just like decay is easier to fix when it is small and doesn't hurt, hiring an outside source early to help you determine what to put in place and how to do that will be the best investment in yourself and your business.



Dentist can profit from business education as it helps understand profit and loss statement, leadership, and business figures in general. (Photograph: Matej Kastelic/Shutterstock)

For someone who might be struggling with the business side of the practice, what would your advice be?

Seek education from reputable sources. Connect with people who have been in the industry for many years and are successful. Receiving advice from someone who has experience can provide you with the solid facts and training needed to improve your business. And the adage “you get what you pay for” still rings true!

Thank you very much for this interview.

About: Andrea Greer has been working in the field of dentistry for over 25 years and since 2013 has worked as a consultant and speaker, helping a number of practices and dentists improve their business and reach new levels of success.

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Intraoral sodium sensor aims to simplify hypertension management

By DTI

ATLANTA, U.S.: Many people have acquired a taste for high-salt foods, which, over the years, may result in health issues related to high blood

pressure. Monitoring salt consumption can help patients suffering from hypertension and certain other conditions to minimize the

symptoms. In order to do that, researchers from the Georgia Institute of Technology have developed a flexible and stretchable intraoral

wireless sensing system—which resembles a dental retainer—to measure the amount of sodium the wearer consumes.

Based on an ultrathin, breathable elastomeric membrane, the sensor is integrated into a miniaturized flexible electronic system that uses Bluetooth technology to wirelessly report the sodium consumption to a smartphone or tablet up to 10 m away. The device has been tested in three adult study participants, who wore the sensor system for up to a week while eating both solid and liquid foods, including vegetable juice, chicken soup and potato chips.

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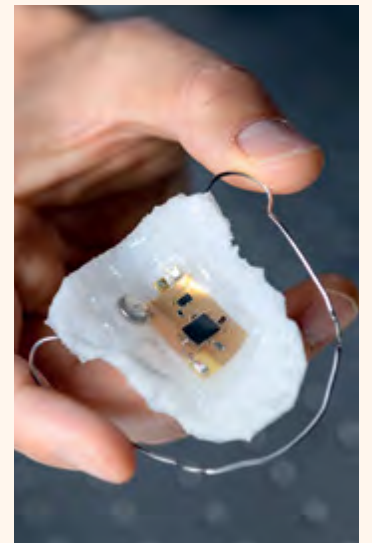
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The intraoral sodium sensor is based on a breathable elastomeric membrane that resembles a dental retainer. The ultrathin device is flexible and stretchable, and can wirelessly transmit data up to 10 m. (Photograph: Rob Felt, Georgia Tech)

“By monitoring sodium in real-time, the device could one day help people who need to restrict sodium intake and learn to change their eating habits and diet. Our device could have applications for many different goals involving eating behavior for diet management or therapeutics,” explained Dr. Woon-Hong Yeo, an assistant professor in the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

He added: “The sensor is comfortable to wear, and data from it can be transmitted to a smartphone or tablet. Eventually the information could go a doctor or other medical professional for remote monitoring.”

The device can record daily amounts of sodium intake as it is consumed. Thus, using a smartphone or tablet application, the system could advise users planning meals how much of their daily salt allocation they had already consumed.

Yeo and his team are currently working on improving the device by further miniaturizing it, aiming for the eventual size of a tooth, and testing it with users who have the relevant medical conditions, such as hypertension, obesity or diabetes.

The study, titled “Wireless, intraoral hybrid electronics for real-time quantification of sodium intake toward hypertension management,” was published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* in May 2018.

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Successful communication in your daily practice Part I: Grumbling patients

by Dr Anna Maria Yiannikos

Imagine getting to your clinic every day and feeling confident that whatever happens to you, you

will be able to resolve it. Resolve a problem easily—in a way that not only you will feel happy with your-

self but also your patients and staff will stay loyal to you, because they will also be happy with the

service and solutions you provide them!

You might be one of the best dentists in your area that has all the knowledge, the experience and the latest technology. But your clients do not see that, they might not understand it. Maybe they cannot see your expertise because of the way you are dealing and communicating with them; maybe your way of communication is not clear enough or not at the level that some of your clients desire!

This is my gift for you today: A whole new series of the most popular and challenging scenarios that might happen at your dental practice and how you will deal with them so that your patients will leave your practice with the feeling: "My dentist is THE BEST!"

How to deal with...grumbling patients?

Let's start with the first script: How to deal with a patient that complains just for the sake of complaining? In the following, I will introduce to you 5 steps of how to deal with this problem successfully and peacefully.

How many times have we completed an excellent work or

Communication is the key for a successful dentist-patient relationship. (Image: Visual Generation)



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have we followed every step of the treatment protocol (for example whitening)? How many times have we informed our patient in detail regarding any discomfort that he or she might feel during a treatment? But the patient still loves to grumble: “Doc, I feel..., the bleeding is excessive..., I have such sensitivity after the whitening...” and so on.

5 steps for a successful communication

Of course, in view of such a patient you might get upset, angry or frustrated; this is absolutely normal and an expected reaction. The important thing is to deal with your patients, to keep them and nothing else. Let’s investigate now the steps that we can apply to get a successful result.

Step 1: Breath

I know it’s hard to not get angry with grumbling patients, but let’s vision ourselves as the conductor of an orchestra: We are responsible to guide them all in the path that we desire.

Step 2: Listen

What is the real problem? Maybe the patient just wants to be listened at and pampered a little bit? Or she wants her ‘problem’ to be resolved by giving her something back (see Step 3). Of course, she has nothing to complain about, everything is normal and expected, but you will never say that to her!

Step 3: Act accordingly

Give your patient something so that she will feel that her prob-

lem is acknowledged and that it will be resolved immediately by you—her trusted doctor! This could be an advice like “Do not rinse for 6 hours”, or a prescription as “Use this cream, it will reduce the sensitivity”.

Step 4: Follow-up

Of course, it is a must to call her and check that she is all right some hours before she calls you (which might the same or the next day, it depends on the case).

Step 5: Ask the right question!

Do never ask her: “Is everything all right?” Why not? Just because of the fact that she will then start complaining again. Ask instead: “I just call to check that everything is ok!” By using this phrase you will not allow space or thought for more complains.

It is so simple!

Start using the described 5 steps each time that you have this

‘invisible problem’. At least, try it as an experiment and see if it works for you as well! Write me your comments or even add-ins. I will love to hear them!

In the next issue of laser magazine, I will present you the second part of this new series of communication concepts that will teach you with 5 simple steps how to shush the patients that have too many questions with courtesy and caring. Until then, remember that you are not only

the dentist of your clinic, but also the manager and the leader. You can always send me your questions and request for more information and guidance at dba@yiannikosdental.com or via our website www.dbamastership.com. Looking forward to our next trip of business growth and educational development!

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