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PMDC annuls registrations of practitioners ...

NEWS

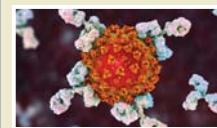
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An exclusive interview with Dr Humayun Taimoor

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Antibody testing for SARS-CoV-2: "We need to talk more ..."

NEWS

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COVID-19: Health ministry issues return to work guidelines for dental care services

DT Pakistan Report

KARACHI - The Ministry of National Health Services and Regulations and Cooperation (NHSRC) recently released fresh guidelines for dentists who are resuming their practices again in COVID-19 pandemic. The detailed official document included recommendations that were in continuation of initial guidelines issued by the ministry earlier.

According to the new guidelines, dental care settings invariably carry the risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection due to the specificity of its procedures, which involves face-to-face communication with patients, and frequent exposure to saliva, blood, and other body fluids, and the handling of sharp instruments. Hence, dental professionals should make sure to limit the contamination which can be done via the airborne spread, contact spread and contaminate spread. It also said, "The clinicians may choose to limit their procedures in early stages with a limited number of patients and can choose to add more with improving condition countrywide."



Photo: DT Pakistan

"All staff should be assessed for risk as an ongoing practice and anyone demonstrating symptoms or having symptomatic household contacts should not be allowed to work and should be instructed for

self-isolation and staff with suspected COVID-19 should be arranged for testing as per government guidelines. After a period of 14 days, if they are

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Pakistan Dental Association urges dentists to join hands in fight against COVID-19

DT Pakistan Report

KARACHI - COVID-19 situation has been complicated and disappointing, and the dental community was demoralized in such a scenario. Dentists have been worried since they were not earning much, along with the constant fear of the contracting virus. They have been fighting an invisible enemy; hence a very challenging time for dentists.

Referring to the impact of a pandemic on the dental community, Dr Mahmood Shah, President Pakistan Dental Association (PDA), said that the COVID-19 had affected



Photo: DT Pakistan

every domain of life. The pandemic has inflicted the psyche, physical working, and financial aspects of dental practitioners in both public

and private sectors and academic institutions. PDA tried its best to find remedies and steps that counter such setbacks and ways to cope with it.

There is also a dire need to take action for the betterment of dental fraternity, and specific demands have to be made from the government to get support in this regard.

He spoke at a live session organized on the topic, 'Current COVID-19 situation and its impact on dental professionals and dental practices.' Speakers who participated in the event were office bearers of PDA located in various provinces and cities of Pakistan. Dr Jawad A Kundi, President-Elect, PDA branch, Peshawar, Dr Mujeeb R Kalwar, President, PDA branch, Hyderabad, Dr Hasan Bashir, President, PDA branch, Gujranwala,

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PMDC annuls registrations of practitioners by PMC

DT Pakistan Report

RAWALPINDI - According to the latest notification of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), the registration certificates of Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP) and Registered Dental Practitioner (RDP) issued by Pakistan Medical Commission has been annulled. The press release also went viral among medical and dental-related social media platforms.

The press release released by the Registrar, PMDC, said, "As all actions of Pakistan Medical Commission together with the Pakistan Medical Commission Ordinance 2019 have been declared ultra vires, registration

certificates of RMP/RDP issued to the doctors are not an exception to that."

The notification further said that doctors should apply again for their registrations.

"Similarly all the faculty members whose provisional or permanent registrations have been issued or renewed by Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) are also directed to apply afresh accordingly."

The users on social media platforms shared a screen grab of PMDC notification and urged the officials to take the decision back.

One user wrote, "They should not create headaches again. There is no need of getting fresh PMDC again if the doctors who had got it by Pakistan



Medical Commission."

Another user commented, "Worst system we have ever had! I sent my PMDC renewal six months back and they rejected it and sent me yesterday all documents with the objection that I should send again with PMDC name."

Many netizens demanded that the renewal of the registration should be free of cost. "A registration is a registration, what the big deal if it's from PMC or PMDC. This just to get more money in the name of fee for new registration," one user commented.

IDS 2021 WILL REVIVE THE INTERNATIONAL DENTAL BUSINESS

Leading global trade fair enables safe restart for the post-corona phase

DT Pakistan Report

COLOGNE - The coronavirus pandemic is also posing unprecedented challenges for the dental industry. The impact on markets and various business models are still difficult to assess. At the same time, all industry participants are working intensively on creative solutions to optimally ensure safe and productive cooperation with partners and suppliers, especially in times of crisis. As the world's leading trade fair for the dental industry, IDS plays a key role for a successful restart of business in the post-corona era in terms of establishing the best possible framework for safe, personal exchange and encouraging a spirit of optimism. "In the past few months, we developed a comprehensive concept for restarting trade fairs in Cologne based on



Annual Press Conference 2020, fltr: Gerald Böse (President and Chief Executive Officer), Henriette Reker (Mayor of the City of Cologne and Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board of Koelnmesse), Oliver Frese (Chief Operating Officer), Herbert Marner (Chief Financial Officer) (Image: Koelnmesse / IDS Cologne)

extensive processes and close cooperation with all the relevant authorities. IDS will also use this concept to provide new inspiration for the dental business. We have created a secure communication platform where experts, enthusiasts and decision makers from a wide range of areas can come together in order to explore new, sustainable avenues for the dental industry," says Oliver Frese, Managing Director of Koelnmesse.

For Mark Stephen Pace, Chairman of the Board of the Association of the German Dental Industry (VDDI), IDS 2021 will also be the decisive kick-off for a new start after the corona crisis: "The international industry is looking at IDS 2021 with high expectations because it plays a significant role in successful crisis management, especially with regard to the personal exchange of strategies in the various markets and

regions. Only through direct dialogue can you examine your own needs and positions and analyse a reorientation, also in terms of value chains."

The focus of a trade fair is on personal face-to-face contact. In order to make this networking as safe and successful as possible, Koelnmesse has developed a host of measures in accordance with the provisions of the corona protection ordinance of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and in close coordination with the authorities in Cologne. These measures work together seamlessly and regulate interaction at the trade fair. Our goal is to ensure the highest degree of professional safety and create an environment in which industries and business can grow again. Koelnmesse has compiled its measures to protect exhibitors and visitors under four sections entitled

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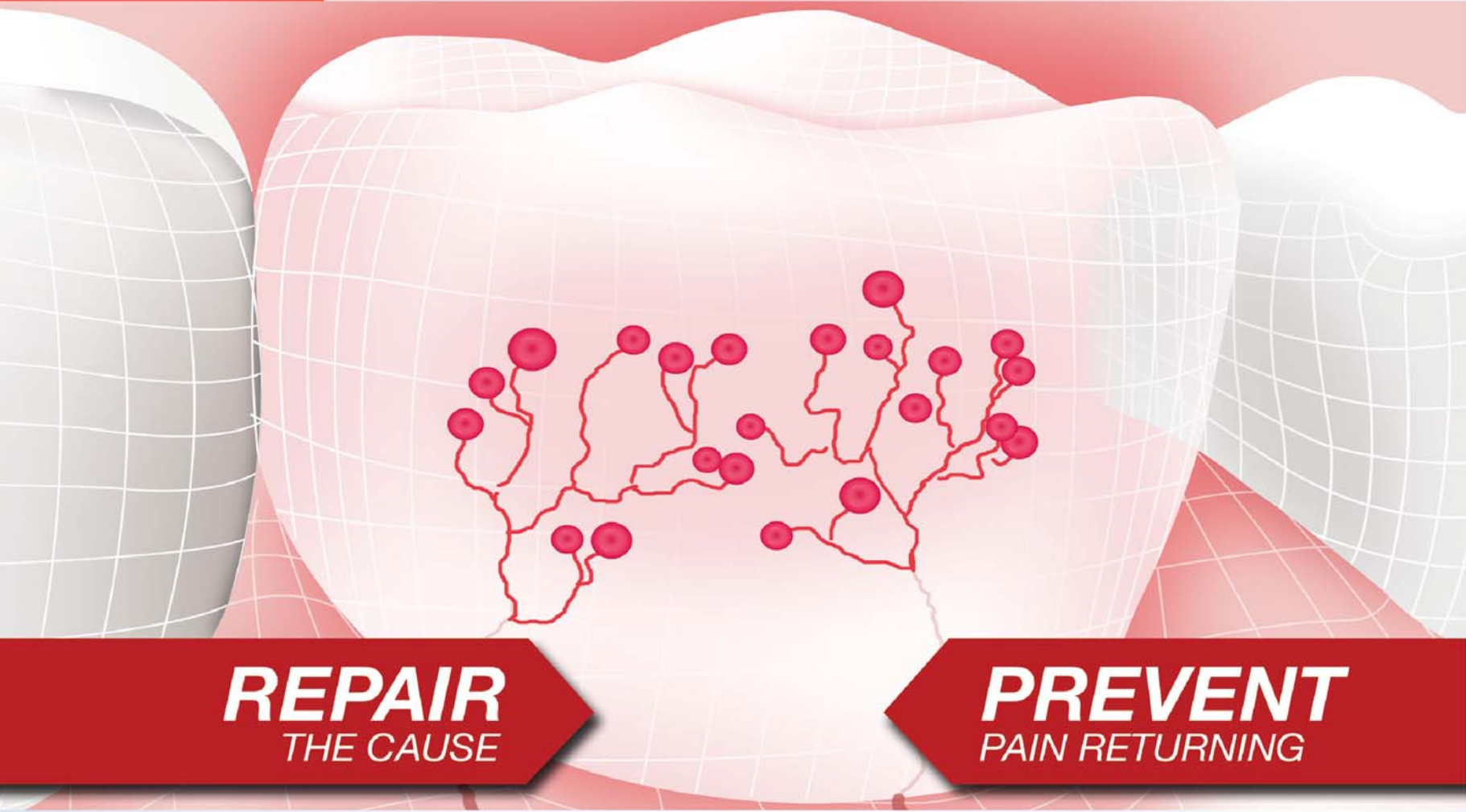
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Relieves the pain of sensitive teeth†	✓	✓
Inhibits Plaque and Calculus Buildup	✓	



† With continued use. Also fights cavities.
‡ As measured with 3% potassium nitrate. For instant relief, apply directly to the sensitive tooth and gently massage for 1 minute.
References: 1. Liu Y et al. J Clin Dent. 2011; 26(10): 323-330. 2. Nunnous S et al. J Clin Dent. 2009; 24(10): 323-330.
3. Jorgensen K et al. J Clin Dent. 2009; 24(10): 323-330. 4. Jorgensen K et al. J Clin Dent. 2009; 24(10): 323-330.
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Recently Dental Tribune Pakistan sat down to talk about his journey as a forensic odontologist for our readers. Excerpts from his interview are as under:

Dental Tribune Pakistan: Kindly introduce yourself to our readers?

Humayoun Temoor: My name is Dr Humayoun Temoor Beg, and I am a dental surgeon by profession. I am trained in forensic Odontology. I am residing in Pakistan for the last ten years. I initiated my services with Officer's Surgeon Medico-Legal as a professional forensic odontologist. About my background, I belong to a small town in Azad Kashmir, and most of my family members belong to the Military or Police department. In my career so far, various air crashes, including the Junaid Jamshed flight air crash incident and multiple bomb blast incidents. Allah has blessed me with respect, and I am always appreciated on many occasions.

DTP: What made you chose this career option?

HT: I always wanted to be different from the rest. I kept on practising after graduation; then my father told me to do specialization. At that time, there were not many options for specialization. Hence I went to England to complete my training in maxillofacial surgery. I soon realized that my thirst for knowledge didn't quench. I talked to my supervisor about it, and he introduced me to this course, and luckily Dr Katherine Adams accepted me into her class. Now she's an excellent friend of mine and mentor as well. Now, this course of Forensic Odontology is happening at the University of Dundee, and the course lead is my class fellow, Ms Sheela. Apart from me, last year two female dental surgeons have completed their Master courses from there, Dr Suman and Dr Falak and they are Karachi based from Dow University. I also want to thank Dr Shahjahan Katpar in this regard that he supported these girls and I also foresee that more people will join this field.

"I went to England to complete my training in maxillofacial surgery, but my thirst for knowledge didn't quench!"

DTP: In your experience, what would you say are the most common applications of Odontology within a forensic context?

HT: Forensic Odontology has 7-8 sub-specialities like dental adjustments, Disaster Victim Identification (DVI), bite mark analysis, criminal liabilities, medical and dental neglect and disaster management planning. Facial reconstruction and facial mapping are one of the new things for the country, dental adjustments were happening before, but the process of this is detailed in Forensic Odontology. It can't be done through any other way. These techniques are further elaborated and are defined meticulously, and then there's training for that, without which it will be tough to perform forensic procedures. Some people might comment that the tasks can still be performed; it doesn't seem that difficult; maybe they are right. There is nothing in the world that is difficult, but, I give an example



The focus on Forensic Odontology is the need of the hour: Dr Humayun Taimoor

By Dr Muattar Hanif

Dr Humayoun Temoor is the first qualified and trained Forensic Odontologist in Pakistan. Graduated from Isra Univesity, Dr Humayoun Temoor completed his Master of Science (MSc.) in Forensic Odontology from the University of Glamorgan, Wales. He also completed his post-graduation in Oral Implantology from Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany. He is currently appointed as Senior Lecturer at University of Health Sciences, Lahore and continuing his services as Forensic Odontologist under Government of Punjab. 2020, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight 8303, crashed on a second landing attempt short of the Jinnah International Airport, Karachi. Ninety-nine passengers, including eight crew members, lost their lives. Most of the deceased were left unidentifiable due to the fire that erupted because of the crash. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Pakistan International Airlines Emergency response unit assembled a forensics team for purposes of identification of the deceased. Dr Humayoun Taimoor was tasked as the Consultant Forensic Odontologist for the air crash victims' identification. He, along with his team, conducted numerous Dental Autopsies and identified the bodies.

of this very incident. A dental surgeon, who is a friend of a family, came to meet us and said that he could identify the body quickly. The body was not in good shape, but somehow he recognized it. The body was then buried before I could even re-check it. Later through the dental data given by the family of the deceased, it was found that the body was not correctly identified, and the wrong body was buried instead.

So it is a message to all those people who think that anybody can do this job. One cannot examine without training and certification. So it is my request

to all the aspirants prefer proper international accreditation, and the licence is issued by Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) to practice this.

DTP: Tell us about a few cases and your most memorable one?

HT: See, I won't discuss cases of counter-terrorism cases, but all examples are challenging. I won't mention counter-terrorism cases because they are state property and identification cases. Every case is challenging. A detailed investigation has to be done. Yes, it has to be done in specific time-frame because some cases are solved quickly.

Some claims take a lot of time. You have to prepare your pieces of evidence properly so that you can prove them in the court of law. As mentioned before, it's a general responsibility that whatever you say or whatever observation you give or any opinion that you forward can be proven in the court of law.

DTP: Is it emotionally disturbing dealing with traumatic cases such as these?

HT: I think it's a special blessing from Almighty Allah. I believe that there is no one but Allah, who can harm or benefit him. Yes, there are social pressures, work area pressures, professional demands are there. But this is for which we are trained. If we are prepared correctly, then we can overcome all these obstacles. Because without this we won't work as a team. It is a very responsible job because you are answerable to the state.

"Some people might comment that the tasks can still be performed; it doesn't seem that difficult; maybe they are right.

There is nothing in the world that is difficult."

DTP: Share your experience related to PIA flight crash incident?

HT: I cannot say much about them because the investigations are still underway. When this incident happened, we were immediately called by my Vice-Chancellor, Prof Dr Javed Akram and ordered to get ready. Mr Javed Akram has a very charismatic personality and believes in quick response. I also had experienced working with him before when Havelian air-crash took place. He was Vice-chancellor back then too of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABMU), Islamabad and he is a gem of a person. He gave me a team to take with me, and all the legal modalities were completed. NDMA Chief ordered my Vice-Chancellor and our team, one or two days before Eid reached Karachi in the evening. Here PIA, NDMA, PDMA (Provincial Disaster Management Authority), local Sindh council, took outstanding care of us, but for some reason, we couldn't initiate work. Still, when we commenced work, by the grace of Allah, we identified the body, on our very first day and I am very thankful to those families because we came just for them after leaving our homes and Eid celebrations. Our mission was to handover the

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new

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President FDI stresses for unity among dental community towards a global vision

DT Pakistan Report

MALAYSIA - Due to the coronavirus crisis, clinical practices all around the world are disturbed. It is essential to discuss the improvement in oral health and clinical practices to maintain the quality of prevention and care in global dentistry.

Referring to the current situation of COVID-19, the International College of Dentists (ICD) Section XV hosted a live session on Zoom on the topic 'Steering oral health profession through COVID-19: How to maintain the course towards a global vision.'

The moderator for the event was Dato' Dr How Kim Chuan, President ICD Section XV.

The guest speaker for the event was Dr Gerhard Konrad Seeberger. President FDI World Dental Federation, President of Academy of Dentistry International, Author, Co-author and peer reviewer in Italian and international journals, Past-speaker at FDI General Assembly, Committee member in Italian minister of Health.

The panellists of the webinar included Prof. Dr Bedros Yavru Sakuk, New York University, College of Dentistry, Board Member of the European Regional Organization, and former Vice-Chairman of "Dental Practice Committee" in FDI, Dr Oliver Hennedige, Secretary-General of Asia Pacific Dental Federation (APDF) and APRO (Aerial Phenomena Research Organization), Executive Director of ICCDE (International College of Continuing Dental Education), Prof. Dr Mohamed Ibrahim Abu Hassan, Council Member of the Malaysian Dental Council, Chairman of Dental Deans Council of Malaysian Dental School and Prof Dr Arshad Mahmood Malik. Principal/ Dean HBS Dental College, Professor, Postgraduate Guide Supervisor, Examiner & Paper Setter. President Emeritus, Regent and Fellow Pakistan society of Oral Maxillofacial Surgery.

Dr Seeberger covered various points in his presentation, including safe clinical practice for patients and the dental team. He highlighted the oral health improvement of people in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Seeberger said that the maintenance



of the quality of prevention and care in dentistry globally should be the utmost priority. He said that the economic changes in the post-COVID-19 would have its effect on dental practices and beyond.

Dr Seeberger stated that "All over the world, we are reacting in the best manner to downsize the spread of the virus."

Dr Seeberger mentioned, "We are still learning about this virus from different countries' experiences. And we shall not waste time waiting for the vaccine because we don't know how long it will take. We should stay calm, use common sense, and opt for personal and social hygiene."

Dr Seeberger highlighted, "FDI has set up COVID-19 library with all the factsheets in multiple languages."

Moreover, he mentioned that dental professionals should seek guidance either from FDI, ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control), WHO (World Health Organisation), or NDA (National Dental Association) regarding coronavirus. He discussed the use of different masks, including N95, surgical and facemask FFP3.

"Dentists need to discuss and refer to experts in maintaining and re-establishing oral health and must emphasize their gatekeeping function in medicine to decrease the burden of non-communicable and communicable disease," Dr Seeberger said.

Dr Seeberger suggested some guidelines for oral health experts regarding the triage on the phone before treatment, reception of patients in dental practice, and on-site and information on risks of COVID-19 and patient consensus. He also said that operator protection of the respiratory tract, eyes, body, hands, and treatment protocols must be followed.

Experts shed light on how to drive dental career further

KARACHI - Dental education experts got together for a seminar on Zoom recently to discuss the 'Higher Inter-Disciplinary Dental Education in London in a new era: Driving your career further.' from the perspective of senior dental academicians.

The event was jointly organised by Barts and The London, School of Medicine and Dentistry and Fatima Jinnah Dental College (FJDC).

"In this day and age, post-graduation has become very necessary. People are opting cities like London to seek knowledge," said Dr Asher Jamelle, Head of Department



of Periodontology, FJDC, who was also moderating the discussion.

The event focused on compiling and critically presenting the educational opportunities concerning the full-time specialty in Periodontology and Distance Learning masters in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery courses available to enhance post-graduate experience and knowledge in taught training.

The key-note speakers for the event, Prof Simon Holmes, Director of Distance Learning and Professor of Craniofacial trauma and Consultant in Oral Maxillofacial Surgery, Royal London Hospital and Dr Domniki Chatzopoulou, Specialist Periodontist and Senior Clinical Lecturer shared valuable insight to increase chances to present successful application.

The webinar session consisted of an interactive presentation discussing the predictable step by step clinical cases to aid optimum aesthetic outcomes. The demonstration of the importance of interdisciplinary training in soft and hard tissue regeneration was also done.

The participants were thoroughly explained with the help of videos and digital material regarding the assessment and operative treatment.

The speakers highlighted the importance of atraumatic experience and socket preservation through surgical techniques. Important critical factors in predicting the outcome in advance facial reconstruction were urged.

Dr Asher concluded the event by thanking the participants and key-note speakers for taking time out in crucial times of COVID-19. -PR

Endodontist highlights tactics to manage complex root canal anatomies

DT Pakistan Report

DUBAI - Root canal shaping and disinfection are the significant factors to impact access cavity designs. The skill to gain ideal cavity design depends on Dental Operating Microscope (DOM), Ultra Sonic (US), experience and operator skills.

Referring to critical endodontic techniques, Dr Mostafa Anwar, BDS, DHM, MDSc, PhD, Assistant Lecturer of Endodontics,

"Predictable Tactics for Safe Management of Complex Root Canal Anatomies"

Mostafa Anwar
BDS, DHM, MDSc, PhD Researcher
F. Assistant Lecturer of Endodontics, Faculty of Dentistry - The British University in Egypt
Certified Healthcare & Hospital Management Specialist - AUC
Editorial Board Member - EC Dental Science Journal
Micro-Endodontics Specialist - Whity Dental Center
Practice Limited to Micro-Endodontics

The British University, expressed his views on "Predictable Tactics for Safe Management of Complex Root Canal Anatomies."

He was speaking in a live zoom session broadcasted from Dubai, moderated by Moataz El-Sheikh.

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Baqai University initiates 'Health Professions Education' course

KARACHI - Baqai Medical University recently conducted the first 'Certificate of Health Professions Education 2020'. Renowned philanthropist and co-founder of Baqai Medical University, Prof Dr Zahida Baqai inaugurated the event along with medical educationists, Dr Ahsan Sethi, Dr Syeda Kauser Ali and Dr Syed Moyn Ali. The first contact session of the six-month course certification was launched under the guidance and supervision of the course director Prof Dr Shams Nadeem Alam and co-director Dr Ain Ul Haq. Despite the lockdown situation in the country, the course was carried out through online lecture sessions and discussions. The facilitators included Dr Ahsan Sethi, Dr Syeda Kauser Ali, Dr Syed Moyn Ali, Dr Sobia Ali and Dr Shahid Shamim.

The course was designed as an essential part of the faculty development program. A total of 25 participants were selected, which included a mix of the Baqai faculty and external participants from different institutes across Pakistan. **-PR**



Photos: DT Pakistan

Dr Ashar Afaq becomes the first dentist to be promoted to Registrar of DUHS

KARACHI - Dr Ashar Afaq, Associate Professor and the former Vice Principal of the Dow International Dental College, DUHS, has been promoted as the Registrar of the Dow University of Health Sciences.

Dr Ashar Afaq is the first dentist in Pakistan to have achieved the honor of being promoted to a senior administrative position at one of the country's most reputable universities.

Dr Afaq graduated from the Hamdard University with a Bachelor's in Dental Surgery in 2004, after which he went on to pursue his postgraduate studies at the Queen Mary University of London.

He has been associated with the Dow University of Health Sciences since 2011. **-PR**



Baqai Medical University tops in 'Online-Classes Readiness' across Pakistan

KARACHI - The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad in its "Ranking of Online-Classes Readiness of Pakistani Universities" has revealed that Baqai

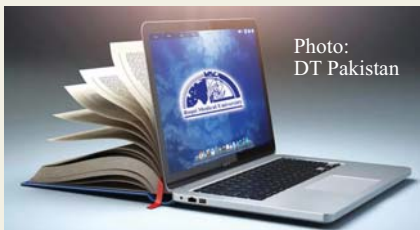


Photo: DT Pakistan

Medical University, Karachi has been ranked at overall 38th position among all universities and 1st position in term of Exclusive Medical Universities in Pakistan.

While talking to Dental News, Dr Ain, Head of Department of Medical Education informed that the Baqai Medical University acquired 93.75 percent cumulative score and also declared 21st among Private Universities in Pakistan. Baqai Medical University spokesperson has credited such triumph to the Pro-Vice Chancellors/Focal Persons, Deans, Registrar, Faculty, officers, employees, students and their parents upon this distinct success and achievement of the university.

100 Universities from all over Pakistan submitted their reports at HEC portal HEDR (Higher Education Data Repository) and on the basis of the collected data, Online readiness was determined. **-PR**

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN DENTISTRY

YDC's Facebook live session with Dr Adil Bin Irfan

KARACHI - Young Dental Council (YDC) recently arranged a live session on their Facebook page. The keynote speaker for the event was Dr Adil Bin Irfan, Head of hospital safety and faculty at Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine. The session comprised of the latest cutting edge discussions to address current issues in dental management.

The session included presentations showcased on PowerPoint and Slide Share in order to give clear guidelines on infection control and prevention in dentistry. While referring to the topic, Dr Adil said, "The subject has been generally ignored by many dental practitioners, however my focus has always been on safety and prevention."

Dr Adil shared his insight on the protection of patients, cross-infection and dental hygiene of the patient. He told, "The transfer of bacteria and disease to the patient is a top priority of professionals and every measure should be taken to prevent this."

Through his session, Dr Adil covered all the aspects from the basics of infections and the importance of preventive measures essential to avoid these infections. He demonstrated modern methods to limit the spread of infections which surely helped the viewers.

Dr Adil emphasised, "Medicating an oral problem is not the only responsibility of a dentist but to prevent the spread of disease carried by the patient, whether an oral or overall infection, is the main goal because many clinicians failed to realise that while treating one patient if you are afflicting 5 other individuals with the disease, you are actually failing as a dentist by putting others health in danger."

The viewers appreciated the

session and the ways involved to inculcate the engagement of the audience.

YDC is a non-government and non-profit organisation run solely by the students of Karachi Medical and Dental Council. The council aims to unite dental students and professionals across Pakistan and to foster education, improve awareness about oral health and foster education, awareness about oral health between dental students and dentists. **-PR**

Antibody testing for SARS-CoV-2: “We need to talk more about it”

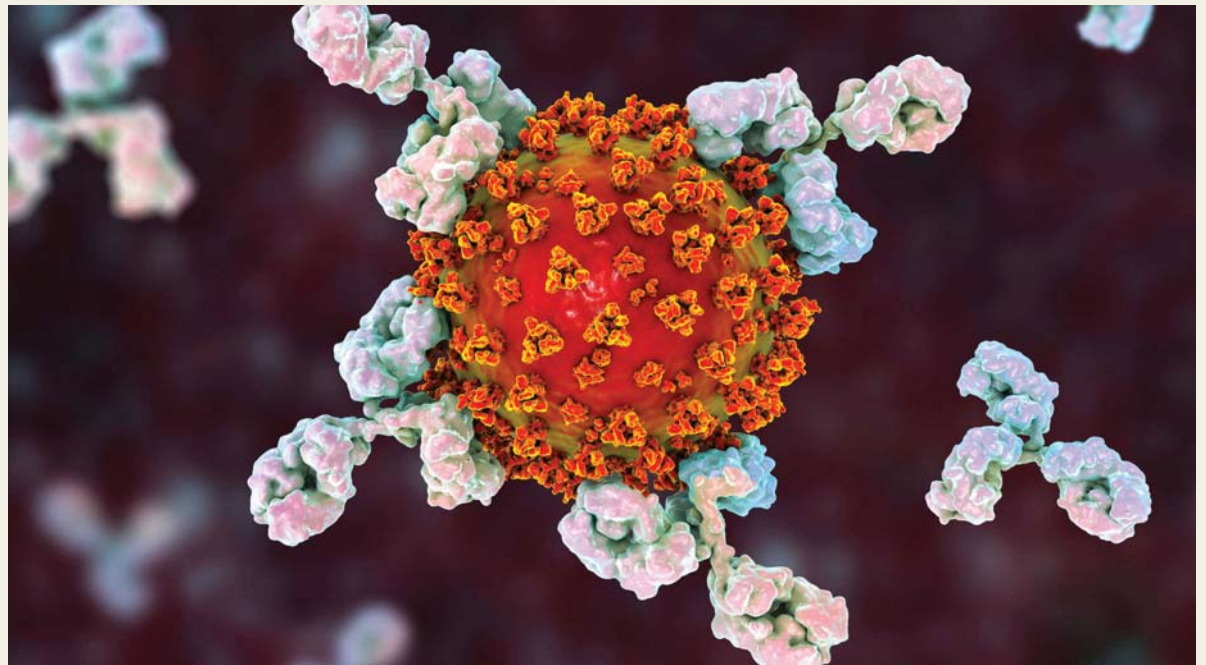
By Jeremy Booth, DTI

LONDON, UK - Despite dental settings presenting a significantly elevated risk of infection for those in and beside the chair, testing patients for the SARS-CoV-2 virus remains optional. Those advocating for testing say that it would help to keep dental practices safer, to reduce the amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) that clinics use, and to streamline appointment scheduling and treatment. A number of options are available, and one UK doctor is advocating for antibody tests for dental practices.

Some dental practices are testing patients for the virus before they undergo an aerosol-producing procedure (AGP). Internationally, however, this remains optional. In the city of San Francisco in the US, for example, it is strongly recommended that dental patients undergoing any AGP be tested for SARS-CoV-2 via a reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test within seven days prior to the procedure. In the health directive from the city, which was updated on 15 June, it is stated that this "test should be performed as close to the day of the AGP as possible." And that, "this test is in addition to the screening requirements on the day of the scheduled procedure."

Many readers will agree that this guidance raises as many questions as it answers: if a patient passes the screening requirements but could be asymptomatic, could they not have already had the virus weeks or months before without presenting symptoms? Will a rapid point-of-care test that detects viral activity—such as a PCR test—provide a dependable result? And is it practical to ask patients to self-isolate until the day of their appointment if the test is not conducted on-site? Dr Priya Suaris, medical director at UK company Salubritas, which is offering guidance on SARS-CoV-2 rapid testing and PPE to medical professionals, says that serological, or antibody, testing offers a dependable and convenient alternative to reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests for dental clinics.

An anaesthetist in private practice, Suaris spoke to Dental Tribune International (DTI) about the need for



Serological tests detect antibodies in a blood sample. Fast and accurate, they could help dentists know if patients have had the virus and experienced no symptoms. (Image: Kateryna Kon/Shutterstock)

testing in dental settings, and the rapid antibody testing kit that Salubritas is offering to dentists.

"In dentistry, testing is very much voluntary at the moment, and we need to talk more about antibody testing," she began. "It seems daft not to be using some sort of testing in dentistry, because we do tests in all other areas of medicine and surgery, and so why are we not applying some of the technology that we have got to risk stratify our patients in some way?"

“[The] actual fact is that the antigen test, which is the swab test that we do in hospitals, is only 50-70% accurate”

— Dr Priya Suaris, medical director, Salubritas

She says that the UK government and media have given antibody testing a bad name. "They have made everybody really wary of it, but the actual fact is that the antigen test, which is the swab test that we do in hospitals, is only 50-70% accurate. And so if you have got a very mild form of COVID-19 and you have a swab test, it might not pick it up and may give you a negative result. This is currently the 'gold standard' in the UK, but it is not really a gold standard at all. The reality is that we actually have got really good testing if you can get the right test and work around its limitations. I think that these [antibody tests] are really easy to use point-of-

care tests in the dental practice."

While PCR tests provide a direct look at what is going on in the patient on the day of the test, antibody tests are a different way of looking at things: essentially, they offer a look into the past and can identify individuals who have had the virus, but have been asymptomatic.

Suaris says that, ideally, dentists should be using both. "The problem with PCR tests is that they take a couple of days so, unless you are going to be really strict with your patients and say, 'Right, we are doing this test now, and you should self-isolate for



The rapid antibody testing kit being distributed by Salubritas costs around £15 (€16.75). (Image: Salubritas)

two days until we get your test results back and you are back in our chair', it is going to be really difficult when people start getting back to work. You can't get dental patients to do that, no way."

The testing kit on offer from Salubritas is a proven test that has been marketed internationally. It costs around £15 (€16.75) and can easily

be administered by dental teams. It works with whole blood, blood serum and blood plasma, has a detection time of 10 minutes and tests for the two antibodies IgM and IgG simultaneously. Crucially, it is reported to be more than 98% accurate.

DTI asked Suaris about demand for the kits in the UK and the benefits of dental practices having a record of their patients' history of COVID-19. "What has happened is that dentists have had so much to contend with, and no one has actually talked about antibody testing, so it has not really crossed their minds. But what is happening now is that they are going back to work and are starting to see the benefits of testing their staff. Soon, I think, they are going to start seeing the benefits of testing patients."

"We are charging our patient for the test, but we are also having to charge our patients for the PPE. But once they have had the test, if they are positive, then they may not need to have another one again—at least, not in this current phase of COVID-19. But if they test negative, then we would continue to test them at regular intervals just to see whether things have changed," she explained.

The rapid antibody testing kit also communicates with a smartphone app, and users can opt to share selected information digitally with their healthcare providers. - **Dental Tribune International**