

Interview: "Dentistry in the Middle East has evolved tremendously in recent years"

By Dental Tribune MEA / CAPPmea

DUBAI, UAE: Recently the Dubai Dental Clinic (DDC), Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC), has received a major facelift and upgrading to a state-of-the-art dental clinic. The clinic which is situated in the heart of Dubai Health Care City Building 34, boasts a total of eight specialty dental departments, a dental laboratory and its very own imaging department. The highly qualified dental team provides multidisciplinary dental healthcare treatments all under one roof. Dental Tribune MEA had the pleasure to interview Dr. Khawla Belhoul, DDS, MS (Healthcare Management) – Director of the clinic, and find out more about the recent upgrades of the Dubai Dental Clinic.

Dental Tribune Middle East: Dr. Khawla, can you please tell us about the future plans of the Dubai Dental Clinic?

Dr Khawla Humaid Belhoul: We are currently working on a major expansion project for the clinic which will include new clinical areas for Pediatric Dental Care, Endodontics, Periodontics, Orthodontics, Oral Surgery, Cosmetic and Restorative Dentistry, General Dentistry and Oral Hygiene. The expansion will also include a radiology department equipped with world-class 3D imaging technology, an in-house dental laboratory and a centralized sterilization services department. This upgrade will further enable us to offer a comprehensive range of specialized services under one roof.

Having operated the clinic for several years now, what are some of the achievements, challenges and opportunities you have faced?

Achievements:

We pride ourselves to have passed the Dubai Healthcare City Regulatory accreditation with a 97 per cent score. This is a clear indication of the clinic's high quality care and patient safety performance.

Furthermore, DDC screened 2000 workers as part of the Oral Hygiene Initiative for workers which was launched in 2015 by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council.

We also treated more than 14,000 patients in 2016

Challenges

We in DDC, just like any other business of dental practices globally, are increasingly facing market competition. However, to overcome this challenge we constantly develop our operation and keep up with industry trends to ensure our competitive advantage in the market.

Opportunities

DDC provides the highest standards of dental care for the community and serves as a primary and secondary referral center for simple and complex dental cases and oral diseases. The Clinic is the clinical partner of Hamdan Bin Moham-

med College of Dental Medicine, the first college under Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine & Health Sciences (MBRU).

What sets the Dubai Dental Clinic apart from the many dental clinics in Dubai, particularly within Dubai Healthcare City?

Today DDC prides itself on being a multi-specialty service provider and having highly qualified specialists and clinical staff. The clinic has advanced equipment for 3D imaging, CAD/CAM and Nitrous Oxide. Furthermore, our affiliation with a strong academic institution (MBRU) allows constant improvement in healthcare delivery based on an evidence-based best practice approach. We also have Individualized care and continuous feedback to patients starting from their first interaction with the DDC.

What role does the clinic play in the overall plans of Dubai Health Care City?

DDC takes part in the overall plans of DHCC through different sectors. In the health sector, we provide: quality patient centered dental healthcare services for the residents of Dubai and the region through developing a robust quality assurance mechanism to meet both national and international standards of quality care.

While, in the Health Education and Research sector we are supporting and facilitating specialized clinical training through our partnership with Hamdan Bin Mohammed College of Dental Medicine, the first college under Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences (MBRU). DDC also supports MBRU's dental research through providing quality clinical data as well as clinical facility support for MBRU students. The research is conducted in a safe and ethical environment leading to the development and improvement of dental services and technology in the UAE and the broader region.

What is your take on the overall oral health in the UAE?

According to many published studies, the prevalence of caries and oral disease in the UAE is higher than other parts of the world. This is partly due to the limited public knowledge and a general lack of awareness about oral health. Therefore, there is a profound need to raise awareness of oral health and how best we can protect our teeth. This can be done through targeted community outreach programs.

Another challenge we face in the UAE is the shortage of highly-qualified dental professionals. Therefore, it is important to focus on the education and training of dental professionals. Through its facility, DDC provides the support required to train the future dental specialists for the UAE and the wider region.

Looking at the fast-paced development within the dental industry, how do you see

"The region is producing high quality general practitioners and specialists."

modern day dentistry being affected?

Dentistry, like any other discipline within healthcare, has tremendously evolved in the past years. The introduction and emphasis on practicing evidence based dentistry has revolutionized dental practice. It is no longer acceptable to provide dental care for patients that is not evidence based. The fast-paced advances in dental equipment and materials is now offering many high-quality alternatives. This has generally led to the provision of a higher quality of dentistry.

What is your opinion on dentistry as-a-whole in the region? Is there a need for improvement?

Dentistry in the Middle East has evolved tremendously in recent years. The region is producing high

quality general practitioners and specialists. State of the art equipment and procedures are also being well utilized. However, more emphasis on an evidence based approach in all undergraduate and postgraduate dental degrees is still needed. Also, there is a need for local institutions to conduct high quality publishable research in the different disciplines of dentistry. **DT**

Thank you very much for the interview.



Dr Khawla Humaid Belhoul
Director of Dubai Dental Clinic
Dubai Healthcare City – Medical

Dr. Khawla Humaid Belhoul is the Director of Dubai Dental Clinic (DDC), Dubai Healthcare City Medical, the healthcare vertical of Dubai Healthcare City Authority. She has been leading the clinic's operations since July 2013.

With a Master of Science in Healthcare Management and a Bachelor in Dentistry and Oral Surgery, Dr Belhoul brings an impeccable skillset and a wealth of knowledge to DDC. Her vast experience of more than 20 years in the medical field has been the main driver in her role of managing DDC.

Dr. Belhoul's commitment to the overall health of the community and her determination to provide quality comprehensive dental care is what enhances the overall experience of DDC's staff and patients. She started her career in dentistry at the Dental Services Department at Dubai Health Authority (DHA). Dr Belhoul later occupied several positions in DHA including Head of Primary Health Centres in the Dental Zone and Healthcare Providers Professional Development Programs Manager at the DHA Medical Education Department.

Prior to joining the Dubai Dental Clinic, Dr. Khawla served as a Director of Clinical Operations at Hamdan Bin Mohammed College of Dental Medicine (HBMCDM). She was also a member of the Global Scientific Dental Alliance (GSDA).

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