EAO publishes new guidelines on safe exposure to X-rays for dental implant patients

The European Association for Osseointegration (EAO) has drawn up new guidelines on the use of diagnostic imaging in implant dentistry. The guidelines have been published online ahead of print and can be accessed as an early view article at www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com. They will be published in print in an upcoming issue of Clinical Oral Implants Research.

They were developed during an international workshop held at the Medical University of Warsaw in 2011. The EAO published its first set of guidelines on diagnostic imaging in 2002. Since then, new radiographic technologies and techniques have become available, including cone-beam computed tomography (CBCT). The new guidelines were drawn up in response to the 2008–2011 SEDENTEXCT project (www.sedentexct.eu), which recommended that the EAO review its 2002 guidelines in light of the availability of CBCT.

Owing to its relatively low cost, as well as the growing number of potential clinical applications, there is an increasing demand for CBCT imaging in clinical dental practice. Although it can provide valuable clinical information, practitioners are required to minimise and balance any patient exposure to ionising (X-ray) radiation with any net benefits to the patient in treatment outcome.

An international panel of expert clinicians and radiologists were invited to participate in the workshop. They were tasked with reviewing and updating the original EAO guidelines and with reaching a consensus on a range of relevant issues.

The new guidelines provide a comprehensive, authoritative and practical framework for clinicians. They will help clinicians fulfil their obligations in ensuring that the use of diagnostic imaging examinations in implant dentistry is justified and obtained at the lowest radiation dose to the patient.

They also highlight the special responsibilities, training and knowledge that are considered prerequisite for both CBCT and conventional radiographic techniques.