Dental professionals in France deliver care through telecommunication

By Iveta Ramonaite, Dental Tribune International

LEIPZIG, Germany: Since 14 March, France has been under COVID-19 Level 3 restrictions, including the halting of all non-essential services. To flatten the SARS-CoV-2 infection curve and ensure the safety of dental professionals, staff and patients, dental surgeries in France remain closed, and dental surgeons are only available to answer any possible questions that patients may have by phone or email, other than emergency treatment.

In an interview with Dental Tribune France, Dr Yassine Harichane, a graduate of the dental faculty of Paris Descartes University, said that like many other dentists, he too is only providing emergency dental care, mainly on the phone. Commenting on the situation, he noted that the impact of COVID-19 for dental companies and the profession as a whole will be profound once operations resume and that the consequences will be twofold. Owing to business interruptions, many companies will face financial difficulties and trouble obtaining materials. Additionally, there will be a change in the relationship between dentists and patients as a result of limited physical contact and the constant fear of being infected.

French Dental Association’s response

The coronavirus pandemic has created substantial challenges for dentistry. The French Dental Association has been proactive in providing guidance and resources to help members navigate these challenges. They have also emphasized the importance of maintaining good oral health through diet and hygiene.

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ed that some dental professionals have chosen to continue their dental activities, ignoring the government’s decision to close all dental clinics. Fournier stated that he strongly opposes such behaviour, since it puts the community and the dentists at risk. Consequently, the organisation has decided to sanction practices that continue to operate their businesses normally. The COVID-19 questions and answers on the French Dental Association website can be found at https://www.adf-assoir.fr/covid-19/questions-en-reponse-a-cdfr.

Busy than ever? Speaking to Dental Tribune International [ITI], Dr Laurence Bury, a dentist and scientific editor at Dental Tribune France, said that, despite the pandemic, she is staying busy. “I go to my office every morning, even on Saturdays and Sundays, when I listen and reply to all the messages and emails and send prescriptions. I’m also in contact with three nursing homes around my office and am fitting their broken dentures and looking at the photographs sent by the nurses to understand the gravity of their symptoms.”

“Four times a week, I see some patients from the neighbourhood for pulpitis and then I wear two surgical masks to protect myself and put on a dental dam over the tooth being treated. Patients come in, wash their hands and rinse their mouths, and then I start working,” she continued. Bury also told DTI that she had found a sensible solution for covering her body while working. She uses a travel raincoat which is reusable and can be disinfected.

When dental activity resumes, hopefully on 11 May, when the lockdown restrictions are to be lifted, Bury said that she will manage one patient at a time and allow 15-minute breaks between patients to be able to sterilise the office.

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