Dental implants see fastest growth in emerging markets

Daniel Zimmermann

NEW YORK, USA/LEIPZIG, Germany: Premium manufacturers are driving the market for dental implants and bone-craft substitutes in countries like China and India, according to iData Research. In a market report, the Canada-based consulting company has also forecasted the market volume of both countries for dental implants to exceed US$400 million by 2017. Strong double-digit growth rates have also been predicted for Brazil, another powerful global emerging market.

The rapid growth of the dental implant market will drive the market for dental biomaterials and bone-craft substitutes. The number of procedures using these products is expected to reach almost 400,000 in both countries by 2017, the report states.

Markets in China and India are currently dominated by a few foreign manufacturers such as DENTSPLY Friadent, Nobel Biocare or Straumann. The last in particular, a Swiss-based company, has increased its market share in China and South Eastern Asia recently with the introduction of innovative products, including the Bone Level Implant and SLActive dental implant surface technology.

Industry experts say that despite the high costs of dental implant procedures, demand will increase further owing to greater oral health awareness and the rise of middle-class income.

“The de-regulation of dental care services in China and India has fuelled growth of private dental clinics in major urban centers,” said Dr Kamran Zamani, CEO of iData. “In addition, the low cost of labour has kept implant procedural costs relatively low, promoting dental tourism from countries such as Japan, South Korea and Australia.”

Europe still holds the largest share of the US$2.8 billion global dental implant market followed by the US, Korea and Japan. The market itself is projected to grow by more than 20 per cent over the next five years.

Fortis Global enters Australia’s dental service market

Daniel Zimmermann

NEW DELHI, India/LEIPZIG, Germany: Fortis Global Health-care Holdings is further expanding its business into the APAC market. The Indian health-care giant, which runs hospitals in India and Hong Kong, has announced plans to acquire a 50 per cent minority stake in Dental Corporation, one of Australia’s largest providers of private dental services. The transaction, worth A$110 million (US$110 million), is subject to stakeholder approval.

In November last year, Fortis took over Quality HealthCare Asia in Hong Kong, making it the largest provider of health-care services in the city state. Prior to this transaction, the company sought to take over Singapore hospital operator Parkway Holdings but bowed out after a two-month battle with Malaysian investor Khazanah. The new transaction will add 150 dental practices with a reported revenue of AU$250 million (US$255 million) per year to Fortis’ business.

Dental Corporation has announced that it aims to use the multi-million investment for expanding its business domestically and in the growing Pan-Pacific health-care market through the established Fortis network. While two Fortis executives will be appointed to the Dental Corporation board, all operational functions and management of the Dental Corporation business will remain unchanged, the company said.

Fortis Global is owned by the brothers Malvinder Mohan Singh and Shivinder Mohan Singh of Delhi. They formed the company late in 2008. Last year, the group achieved a turnover of Rs 55.7 billion (US$755 million), according to financial reports.

Kuraray shifts dental business, Merges with Noritake

Daniel Zimmermann

HONG KONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: A new dental device giant is taking form in Japan. According to business reports, Kuraray and Noritake are to merge their dental operations. The transaction has been filed for clearance by the Japan Fair Trade Commission and is expected to be finalised in early 2012, representatives of both companies said.

Under the agreement, both businesses will be joined in a new holding company and effectively merged with a basic capital of 15 million (US$161,000) by April 2012. It is also reported that Kuraray will hold a two-thirds majority stake in the new company.

Kuraray’s dental business, which is owned by Kuraray Medical, a fully owned subsidiary, comprises bonding agents and fillings based on polymer and organic synthetic technology. Noritake Dental Supplies currently distributes dental ceramics in over 90 countries. Both companies are reported to have combined sales of approximately 15.5 billion (US$104 million) worldwide and to hold a share of 40 per cent in their respective market segment in Japan.

Kuraray Medical President Sadaaki Masuyama told the website nikkei.com that his company wishes to strengthen its share in domestic and overseas markets through the merger. Overall, the new company aims to boost sales to almost 20 billion (US$245 million) in the next seven to eight years, he added.

According to industry experts, domestic medical and dental device sales in Japan have declined as a result of reduced demand for dental services. Premium products in particular, such as implants and ceramics, are being brushed off by dental patients.

With an annual turnover of US$20 billion, the Japanese market for medical and dental equipment is the second largest in the world. The country only imports 20 per cent from overseas.