IDS flourishes despite economic trouble
Overseas sales rescue German dental industry from declining domestic market

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LEIPZIG, Germany: The world’s largest dental show has defied the economic gloom. According to a preliminary report released by the organiser Koelnmesse at the end of March, the number of visitors this year increased by 6.9 per cent to over 100,000. The number of exhibitors also rose by 4.5 per cent to 1,920. International companies held a 65 per cent share, an increase of 10 per cent compared with the previous show in 2007.

The results confirm a slight decline in the German domestic market, which is significant for the local dental industry. Sales have dropped by 2.6 per cent to €1.58 billion compared with 2007; this is attributed mainly to financial constraints in the dental and dental technology sectors in the last quarter of 2008. Although dental physicians are the group of medical specialists who are the most willing to invest in the establishment of clinics, according to the latest results of the Institute of German Dental Physicians (IDZ), the overall investment trend has fallen significantly.

However, a survey conducted by the Association of German Dental Manufacturers (VDDI) found that export business expectations for 2009 are positive overall in spite of varying business development in individual regions. VDDI Chairman, Dr Martin Rickert said that 85 per cent of the member companies surveyed expect a rise in, or at least consistent, overseas sales for 2009. The export quota of the companies traditionally operating as ‘global players’ is 57 per cent.

“It is good news that in spite of the turbulence in the financial market, the dental industry and the health economy can, overall, sustain as solid markets,” Dr Rickert said during a press conference in Cologne. “IDS has confirmed its status as the international leading trade show in dentistry.”

“We are certain that the show’s outcome will give positive signals for the global dental market and international health markets as well,” he added.

NY dental college boosts HIV research

Seeking to shed new light on HIV’s ability to survive in the body and cause disease, the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases has awarded a five-year, US$1.9 million grant to an AIDS research team at the New York University College of Dentistry to continue its study of a new mode of HIV replication that involves cooperation between viruses.

Dr David N. Levy, an Assistant Professor of Basic Science and Craniofacial Biology, discovered the mechanism in an earlier study he conducted with the assistance of a one-year pilot grant from CFAR, The Center for AIDS Research at the NYU School of Medicine. He demonstrated that unintegrated viruses can replicate when they are assisted or “complemented” by viruses that successfully integrate with the DNA of infected cells.

Oil giant helps children brush

Shell Petroleum in Brunei is donating US$8,570 to the country’s Dental Health Pilot Project, which aims to help children to carry out regular brushing of their teeth. In the ASEAN region, Brunei ranks the worst in the number of youngsters under 12 with decayed, missing and filled permanent teeth.

Soft drinks under attack

In an attempt to reduce dental health problems, the Philippines has announced plans to tax soft drinks. Should the bill be ratified, the government will charge a 20 per cent duty on carbonated drinks through their inclusion in the list of non-essential goods in the country’s National Internal Revenue Code.

Graduates in India leave dentistry

Many Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) graduates in India are forced to quit dentistry and work in other, more lucrative jobs, according to the newspaper the Times of India reports. Many of them, for example, would join a BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) or work in health insurance agencies, which pays three to four times better than beginning dental work. BDS graduates usually earn between US$40 and US$60 a month when they start working as a dentist.

Dental education in India has grown in recent years and now ranks first in the world in having the highest number of dental schools. The country has more than 250 dental institutions, which produce between 15,000 and 20,000 BDS graduates every year.