Members’ Corner: Dr Stuart Johnston

Dr Stuart Johnston

In this issue of WDC, we are pleased to have FDI Dental Practice Committee and Dental Amalgam Task Team (DATT) member, Dr Stuart Johnston discuss his involvement with FDI World Dental Federation and share his vision for oral health.

WDC: As a practicing dentist, what made you decide to devote your time to addressing issues affecting dental practice at an international level?

Dr Stuart Johnston: I initially became involved with organized dentistry at the local level because I was dissatisfied with the system of dentistry in the U.K. After some time, I became Chairman of the local body and went on to represent the U.K. at the national level.

People gave me jobs to do and I didn’t say “no”. I enjoyed it … I enjoyed learning and actively making a better future for myself and colleagues in U.K.

“Accidently” I had the opportunity to attend the FDI Congress in New Delhi, in 2004, as a representative of the British Dental Association. I wasn’t sure what to make of it at first, it seemed very complex. But after this experience, I reflected on the opportunities FDI involvement presented and quite liked it – the complexity of it, it was something completely new, I wanted to understand FDI, what we could do, how I could help raise the profile of my home association there.

There is a symbiotic relationship, representing BDA at FDI and bringing benefits back to dentists in the U.K.

You were recently invited to join FDI Dental Amalgam Task Team (DATT). What is the purpose and formation of DATT?

It is fascinating work – the way these colleagues have communicated with one another around the world, all cooperating, and the quality of debate is superb. The FDI Council mandated that a Dental Amalgam Task Team (DATT) be established to ensure that the international dental community and issues regarding dental amalgam were properly and accurately represented in United Nations discussions regarding mercury and would be based on the best available science. For details see UNEP Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) website:

www.unep.org/

The DATT consists of a representative from each of the FDI standing committees, three Council representatives and where required be supplemented with subject matter experts.

Where does the DATT stand now and what role does it play in FDI overall mission?

At the UNEP meeting in Stockholm, 7–11 June 2010, I was privileged to represent FDI Dental Amalgam Task Team. This meeting saw a continuation of the process begun in November and we had the opportunity to lobby delegates to our position to avoid an all-out amalgam ban. DATT is looking to develop information for member NDA’s to take back to their countries to communicate with their governments directly. It will be governments who vote on this, so we require a team effort to achieve the desired result.

In regards to dental amalgam, it is not a health issue because the dental profession has a significant body of evidence that the use of amalgam as a restorative material is safe with respect to human health. However it is the broader considerations with regards to mercury that the inter-governmental negotiating committee is addressing.

Is FDI developing a position on environmental waste?

We must be seen as doing everything we can, including:

• Make sure all waste is collected properly in dental surgery and properly disposed of and re-cycled wherever possible, to avoid contamination

• Move away from bulk mercury, which can be misappropriated for small scale gold mining, towards capsule mercury, which avoids spillage

What does the FDI World Dental Federation offer to the dentist?

The world is changing and FDI helps us understand how this change at international or global level. For example, amalgam is prime issue. FDI can represent this at the world level for the dental profession. Another example is OCL and how it fits together, there is serendipity – the strategy for dealing with caries sees a reduction in need for amalgam.

There is a huge opportunity to make a real difference through FDI. For some associations from more advanced countries, part of FDI’s work is the duty to help colleagues in developing areas. There is a global responsibility which is enshrined in the following amalgam issue – this shows that we are one world, working together for better oral health.

What plans does the FDI Dental Practice Committee (DPC) have for 2010?

I have been a Member of DPC for just over a year, basically to meet with colleagues and see how we approach problems differently. It can be difficult to produce the consensus statements due to different legal systems and philosophies of care, so when we produce a statement it is even more satisfying. Benefits of being part of the DPC include meeting more of the people involved in FDI work, and feeling more that I am part of the team.

Looking at purpose of the committee, there will be fewer but more focus projects with the DPC collaborating with other committees to contribute to FDI strategic objectives. We are looking at the dental team, risk management in dental practice, infection control and waste management.

Also we have been approached by colleagues at the Indian Dental Association, which is GCI and how it fits together, the world is changing and FDI is a part of this change at international or global level. For example, amalgam is prime issue. FDI can represent this at the world level for the dental profession.

Where do you see your work taking you with FDI?

I am enjoying what I am doing now. It means meeting colleagues at the  Indian Dental Association proposed a project to develop a national cross infection control programme in collaboration with the World Health Organisation.

The successful completion of this project has benefited the dental team and the entire Cambodian population. A training manual on cross-infection control (CIC) for dental practitioners has been developed. Also, as a result of this project, knowledge and behaviour of dentists in relation to infections has improved.

The World Dental Development Fund accepts applications on a continuous basis. To improve oral health and oral health care services in developing countries, educational projects delivered in collaboration with governmental, non governmental organizations and individuals, and supported by the FDI member association are encouraged. The numerous applications received from community organisations and initiatives highlights the enormous need for effective oral health programmes.

FDI invites well-wishers to support this very important work by making donations to the WDF, so that we are able to expand and sustain the funds successful activities. For more information:

www. fidwonderland.org/node/199

FDU Revisits Suntec Center, Singapore

Eight months after the successful 2009 FDI World Dental Congress at the Suntec International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Singapore, FDI returned to Singapore to participate in the biennial International Dental Exhibition and Meeting (IDEM) that took place from 16 to 18 April 2010.

Dr Roberto Viana, FDI President, was present at IDEM Singapore to promote FDI’s presence and to extend FDI’s spirit of partnership among participating stakeholders.

“IDEM Singapore brings together many facets of FDI’s work.

Spotlight on World Dental Development Fund

Established in 1998, the World Dental Development Fund (WDDF) has made a difference to the lives of disadvantaged people in many places around the globe through its support of oral health education and outreach programmes.

In 2009, the World Dental Development Fund aims to improve oral health primarily in disadvantaged populations through education, oral health promotion, disease prevention and primary health care.

The variety of projects that are funded highlights different approaches to better oral health in contrasting settings. Current projects range from capacity building in Africa, to improving oral health in rural India, through to integrating oral health in primary health care in northern Pakistan, and oral cancer awareness and HIV/AIDS awareness training for dentists in Latin America.

The World Dental Development and Health Promotion Committee, the body responsible for the management of the World Dental Development Fund within FDI, recently completed a project in Cambodia. Here, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis is one of the highest in South-East Asia.

Due to the lack of established standards and training materials regarding infection control for dental personnel, the Cambodian Dental Association proposed a project to develop a national cross infection control programme in collaboration with the World Health Organisation.

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“IDEM Singapore brings together many facets of FDI’s work.
Towards improving oral and general health, together with the Singapore Dental Association, FDI develops outstanding Continuing Education programs—based on relevant and timely topics for the profession—which not only play an important role in the development of dentistry and dental professionals, but also in advocating the importance of oral healthcare to the population,” said Dr Vianna at the FIDI opening ceremony.

Organised by Koelnmesse and the Singapore Dental Association (SDA), in cooperation with FDI World Dental Federation, the 2010 edition of IDEM Singapore delivered cutting-edge insights into the very latest in dental technology, techniques and patient treatment. The 2010 Scientific Conference at IDEM Singapore, which featured 18 international thought leaders in their respective fields, brought to the fore new protocols in patient treatment. Moreover, the most recent innovations that help dentists minimize the risks involved in advanced procedures, while enhancing the results for patients, were showcased by 552 exhibitors from 51 countries.

Participants equally benefited from a Consumer Education Forum, organized by the Singapore Dental Health Foundation, in conjunction with IDEM Singapore. The forum sought to update the public beyond the basic principles of good oral care, exploring topics such as the relative advantages and disadvantages of implants, what patients should ask their dentists about implants and the intriguing ‘truth-in-architecture’. Participants went away with valuable insights into the challenges and limitations of dental implant procedures.

IMD Singapore 2010 also saw the introduction of ‘Let’s Talk, Business seminar’ in which participants deliberated on how they can leverage technology to transform the delivery of dental treatments.

Looking forward, the theme and speakers for IDEM 2012 Scientific conference have been chosen. IDEM 2012 will focus on ‘Advances and Controversies’. It will have the following personalities as keynote speakers: Dennis Tarnow from the Columbias’ School of Medicine, New York, and Dr Michel Magne and Dr Pascal Magne from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Friday 23 April 2010 saw the official opening of the new FDI World Dental Federation head office and the start of a new chapter in FDI’s evolution. FDI secretariat have been settling into the new location since the move from Ferney-Voltaire, France, last September immediately following Congress.

The move from France to Switzerland reflects the diversity of FDI membership. Geneva is international crossroads with its multicultural population, in a country with four official languages, located in heart of Europe and well connected to rest of the world. Also significant is the fact that Geneva is a Capital of Health, with FDI neighbours including the World Health Organization, World Heart Federation, International Federation of Red Cross, and Medicins sans frontiers. Furthermore the consolidation of FDI businesses under a single entity provides a more simplified management and a favourable taxation environment.

Attending the ceremony were FDI Council members and staff, FDI members, corporate sponsors, partners and other NGO’s. Mr Stéphane Graber, Délégué au Service de la Promotion Economique du Canton de Genève, and Mr André Klopman, Chargé des ONG internationales, Canton de Genève, represented the Canton de Genève.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was performed by FDI President, Roberto Vianna. FDI Executive Director, David Alexander, and FDI’s for the Canton de Genève, André Klopman. Guests enjoyed a brief tour of the office on the 5th floor having a sneak peak of FIDI’s new “home” and FIDI’s colourful windows.

Grand Opening cere- mony coincided with FIDI Coun-

The Grand Opening ceremony marking the end of the three-year Live.Learn.Laugh. Philippines demonstration project, Governor of the province of Batangas, Vilma Santos-Recto, affirmed her plans to expand the Batang May K (BMK) project to ten more municipalities of the Province of Batangas.

Batang May K—Empowering children to Healthy Habits, was a project under the Live.Learn.Laugh partnership of FDI World Dental Federation and Unilever Oral Health in association with the Philippine Pediatric Dental Society and Philippine Dental Association (PDA).

The BMK project aimed at improving the oral and overall health status of pre-school children in day care centers in Batangas through tooth brushing, hand-washing, finger- nal cutting, healthy diet, mass de-worming and waste management.

The Grand Opening of FDI head office in Geneva, Switzerland

Successful Live.Learn. Laugh. project

Initiative pilots adoption of a province-wide oral health programme in the Philippines

During the 1 March 2010 ceremony marking the end of the three-year Live.Learn.Laugh. Philippines demonstration project, Governor of the province of Batangas, Vilma Santos-Recto, affirmed her plans to expand the Batang May K (BMK) project to ten more municipalities of the Province of Batangas.

During the ceremony, outstanding day care centers and workers in the province received awards for good implementation of the project’s components, improvement in their centers and their promise to sustain the project.

As a catalyst for the three-year Live.Learn.Laugh. Philippines project, following a National Oral Health Survey reported that 97.1% of six-year old children suffered from dental caries and 84.7% from dental infections, the Philippine Pediatric Dental Society instigated a project to empower children to healthy habits.