Malpractice in Pakistan spreads

Policy makers in Pakistan have urged the government to condemn the spread of medical malpractice through tougher restrictions on the registration of medical and dental personnel. According to the Pakistan Ministry of Health, over 200,000 doctors including 70,000 dentists currently practice without a licence.

Korean kids have better oral health

Dentists from the Department of Preventative and Public Health Dentistry at the Seoul National University in South Korea have reported a decline of dental decay among children. Most improvement was observed in the age group 9 where, in 2006, over 40 per cent had lower caries levels compared to the year 2000.

Dental crisis to worsen on Fiji Islands

Private dentists on Fiji are having a hard time to find enough patients to sustain their business. At least two practices on the main island Viti Levu have closed down in November due to lack of patients, Fiji Dental Association President Dr Vikash Sigh told the newspaper Fiji Times.

According to the latest National Oral Health Survey in 2007, the country has slightly over 100 dentists of which 50 are currently working in private practice. Prevalence of dental decay is high among all age groups and mostly left untreated which observers say is due to the price of dental treatment that the majority of Fijians are not able to afford.

Dr Sigh commented that dentists recently had to increase their fees in order to buy and import expensive dental equipment from providers abroad.

Forensic centre opens in India

The state government of Karnataka in India has approved the Department of Forensic Odontology of the SDM College of Dental Sciences and Hospitals in Dharwad as the country’s first institution for forensic dental case-work. It will function as referral centre for forensic examination of teeth following disasters or in criminal cases, according to members of the Indian Association of Forensic Odontology (IAFO).

Currently, the examination of teeth in medico-legal cases is not standard procedure in India. Established in 2006, the Department led by IAFO secretary Dr Ashith B. Acharya has lobbied for the state’s approval for more than two years. Forensic experts have hailed the decision as another step in the recognition of the specialty by the medical profession, police and judiciary.

India currently has only eight forensic dentistry experts nationwide, of which most have received their formal education abroad.

Overseas dental work troubles Australia

Fourty per cent made offshore – Professionals demand legislative change

HONG KONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: Almost every second dental patient in Australia is receiving dental work that is made abroad. Dentists in the country are now demanding new legislation to make it mandatory for the profession to let patients know where their crowns or bridges are being produced. Momentarily, only dental prostheses made in Australia are regulated by the government but those standards do not apply to imported dental work.

Dental laboratories in Thailand, India or China have gained a huge share out of the regional dental prosthetics market. Companies like Moderva Dental Laboratory, which maintains a large facility with 5,000 technicians in Shenzhen near the China-Hong Kong border, are increasingly serving customers in Australia making it harder for local labs to compete.

Job prospects for dental technicians have been steady recently but could decline by 50 per cent over the next 10 years, a government report has found.

Unlike humans, these animals have 40 teeth and can open their mouth to an angle of 180 degrees. (DTI/Photo courtesy of Xinhua News, China)
Malaysia teams with global dental organisation to help kids

HONG KONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: The National University of Malaysia’s Faculty of Dentistry is taking on the oral health of children. At the International Conference of the Academy of Preventive Dentistry (AAPD) in Kuala Lumpur in November, the faculty announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Global Child Dental Fund, a UK-based international oral health organisation. The agreement is supposed to promote dental research and programmes that could affect disadvantaged children in Malaysia and elsewhere.

The Global Child Dental Fund, led by England’s former Chief Dental Officer and Dentistry Prof. Raman Bedi, was founded in 2006 to support governments worldwide on improving children’s oral health. The organisation maintains programmes in over fourteen countries, including Australia, China and the Philippines. It is sponsored by dental heavyweights Colgate-Palmolive and Henry Schein.

Prof. Bedi, who is based at King’s College in London, told Dental Tribune Asia Pacific that under the agreement a Malaysian national child dental health taskforce led by AAPD past president Prof. Rahimah Abdul Kadir, Malaysia, will be established to champion the dental needs of disadvantaged children and to implement and coordinate country-wide activities. It also aims to grow local and regional capacity for effective caries management, as well as support new dental leadership programmes in the country.

“I am delighted that such a prestigious university as the National University of Malaysia will be working with us and that Prof. Kadir will be leading this work,” Prof. Bedi said. “Only transformational dental leadership will change the rising levels of early childhood caries and for this we need effective leaders within the dental profession.”

According to figures from the Ministry of Health in Malaysia, only 15 per cent of children below the age of five are caries-free.

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Prof. Dato’ Hassan Basri (left) and Prof Bedi signing the memorandum. (DTI/Photo courtesy of UKM, Malaysia)