An Increasing Population with Special Needs

An interview with Prof Luc Martens, Belgium, about special care dentistry in daily practice

Daniel Zimmermann & Claudia Salwiczek
Dental Tribune International

At the FDI Congress in Dubai, Worldental Daily spoke with the current President of the International Association of Disability and Oral Health (IADH) about his work and how dentists can meet the needs of patients with disabilities. Prof. Martens graduated from the University of Ghent in 1980 and completed his PhD there in 1987. He is the chairman of the Department of Paediatric Dentistry at Ghent and founding member and Past President of the European Academy for Paediatric Dentistry (EAPD).

The IADH recently changed its name from the International Association of Disability and Oral Health to the International Association for Disability and Oral Health. What was the reason for this?

Prof Martens: After years of discussion within the IADH council, the change of the name was finally decided in the year 2000. The main reason for it was, on the one hand, the strict meaning of the word ‘handicapped’, which has worldwide a pejorative sound and which is spontaneously related to mental retardation. The target group of IADH, however, is a group of patients with special needs. This is far beyond the border of being handicapped. It deals with all patients with impairments, disabilities and, finally, handi-

Marijuana A Cancer Risk

John Hoffman
Dental Tribune International

Smoking marijuana may significantly raise a person’s risk of developing cancers of the neck and head, according to new research from UCLA’s Jonsson Cancer Center. Dr. Zuo-Feng Zhang, a professor of epidemiology at the UCLA School of Public Health, cautions that marijuana is often overlooked as a cancer risk, but the drug contains stronger carcinogens than tobacco.

Marijuana is the most popular illegal drug in the U.S., and more than 50 percent of all Americans 12 or older are estimated to have tried it. Zhang and his fellow researchers found that the more marijuana a person smokes, the greater the risk of developing neck and head cancers, and people who use marijuana habitually for many years face an especially high risk.

Zhang warns that cancers of the mouth, tongue, larynx and pharynx take years to develop, and incidence of those cancers may grow sharply as baby boomers age. Marijuana may also exacerbate a genetic defect that prevents some people’s DNA from repairing itself. People who have that defect and smoke marijuana are 16 times more likely to develop head and neck cancers than are non-marijuana-smokers whose DNA repair function operates properly.

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In addition, the term ‘dental care’ became old fashioned in modern health policies. Care for the whole oral sphere is important, not only teeth, therefore ‘oral health’ was introduced in place of dentistry. As the DTT network continues to grow and meet the needs of our most important ally — our readers — I hope you will continue to send us your feedback about how we are doing no matter which edition you read.

I wish you every bright and beautiful thing as the calendar year comes to a close, and send you my sincere wishes for good health and a peaceful spirit in the year ahead.

Sincerely,
Robin Goodman
Group Editor
Dental Tribune America LLC
December 2007

A Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

This December marks my fifth year handling the Dental Tribune Asia Pacific Edition as a Managing Editor for Dental Tribune International (DTI). I am honoured to have had the opportunity to oversee the development of this newspaper from a mere three editions in 2005 to the ten editions it does now. Over the years I’ve had the pleasure of working with and getting to know my many license partners around the globe as they launched their editions and sought my assistance on editorial matters within the DTT network.

It has been a delight to meet all of our readers over the years as well — either at dental events or via e-mail, phone and fax. The biggest debt I owe, however, is to the authors featured within our pages who have given freely of their time and knowledge, and have educated me about the world of dentistry. To each and every one of you I give my heartfelt thanks for your time and patience.

Like all things in life, change is inevitable, but it is something I have always welcomed due to the new opportunities it brings. Beginning in January 2008, Daniel Zimmermann will take over as Managing Editor for DT America. However, I know of no one more capable within the DTI network of guiding this publication into its sixth year and effecting the positive changes that you will soon see within these pages.

I will happily remain a part of the DTI network as I take on expanded duties for DT America as the Group Editor for a team of five editors and one staff writer. DT America joined the DTT network in 2006 with a DTU U.S. weekly edition and is a specialty edition of Dental Tribune and Ortho Tribune. As the DTT network continues to grow and meet the needs of our most important ally — our readers — I hope you will continue to send us your feedback about how we are doing no matter which edition you read. I wish you every bright and beautiful thing as the calendar year comes to a close, and send you my sincere wishes for good health and a peaceful spirit in the year ahead.

Namaste,
Robin Goodman
Group Editor
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