Disagreement arises on dentist numbers in Australia

Uncapped higher education system contributes to oversupply, dental associations say

DT Asia Pacific

SYDNEY, Australia: Experts in Australia have questioned claims by the Australian Dental Association (ADA) and the Australian Dental Students Association in Sydney that the higher education system in the country is placing too many dental graduates on the market, thereby contributing significantly to an oversupply of dentists. Conor King, Executive Director of Innovative Research Universities, a network of seven universities with dental schools in the Gold Coast, Melbourne and Townsville, recently told the The Australian that the criticism is deficient and the current uncapped system has not lead to a “wild breakout” in dental places.

In a letter directed to Minister for Education Christopher Pyne, ADA President Dr Karin Alexander said that there are currently too many students graduating from dental programmes in Australia, which, according to her, would leave the entire industry over-supplied with dentists for at least another 12 years. She called for reducing the number of new graduates by removing the cap on graduates from dental schools by 2015.

A small boy receives a demonstration on how to brush his teeth correctly during a special event held by the University of Hong Kong on the occasion of World Oral Health Day in March. (DTI/Photo courtesy of University of Hong Kong)