Indian dental clinic chain aims for expansion

HYDERABAD, India: India’s rising dental health-care sector is expected to receive another significant investment, as Alliance Dental Care has announced that it will triple its number of dental clinics by mid-2013. The expansion is intended to serve different market segments, including dental spas, regular dental clinics, as well as express cleaning and whitening spots located in public places like airports and shopping malls.

Alliance Dental Care was founded in 2002 as a subsidiary of Alliance Medcorp, a joint venture between Apollo Hospitals and medical equipment provider Trivitron. Both companies have been reported to seek private investors in order to raise Rs 0.5 trillion (US$10 million) for the first phase of the expansion in 2012. The new clinics, as well as the existing ones, have been re-branded as White Dental Clinics, they said.

Alliance Dental Care currently maintains over 20 dental clinics in major Indian cities like Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. In addition to its Indian business, the joint venture is also eyeing potential markets overseas, including South-East and West Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

According to the latest financial reports, Apollo boasted revenues of Rs 23 trillion (US$460.4 million) in 2010/2011. Once the expansion has been completed, the company will hold a 70 per cent share in Alliance Dental Care.

Contact allergies owing to gloves: A growing problem in dentistry

Ben Adriaanse, DT Netherlands.

HOUTEN, Netherlands: In recent years, researchers have noted a significant increase in contact allergies to rubber additives among health care professionals. Although the cause of this cannot be stated with certainty, experts believe that nitrite gloves do.

In the 1980s, the use of medical gloves made of natural rubber latex was introduced into dentistry. Owing to an alarming number of allergic reactions caused by certain proteins contained in latex, synthetic alternatives like nitrite and vinyl gloves emerged shortly afterwards. While they, like other alternatives, score significantly lower in comfort and elasticity, nitrite gloves are most commonly used by dentists.

According to Michiel Paping, director of Budec, a Dutch research and development company focused on natural rubber latex allergens, type I allergic reactions, which are immediate reactions to allergens in a product, are likely caused by added chemicals. In addition, it is unavoidable that thinner gloves will score worse in terms of comfort and permeability,

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According to the experts, a change of thinking and a policy on rubber gloves based on neutral information is urgently needed. Currently, a number of inferior products on the market owing to the fact that CE markings can be awarded based on self-assertion in Europe, Paping said. He recommended the implementation of new standards to replace the CE marking in order to promote high-quality products that are flexible, cause as little sensitisation as possible and keep permeability as low as possible.

Contact allergies caused by gloves are a growing problem and should not be underestimated, the experts concluded. “With an annual global use of more than 150 billion pieces, the medical glove is something that requires serious attention,” said Paping. “It is a condition that can threaten your career and you can develop it suddenly,” he warned.

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When health care professionals start working in practice, they use the same glove out of habit. When gloves are ordered, the responsible person most often looks for the cheapest product on the market. As a result, cheap gloves of unknown origin are sometimes used in dental care,” Paping said.

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(Edited by Claudia Duschek, DTI)