Three cheers for Dr Crouch

A n orthodontist has won a landmark victory after taking on the Department of Health and fighting against an appeal, which would have given health bosses the right to terminate dental contracts without cause or notice.

The DH lodged the appeal earlier this year after Eddie Crouch, an orthodontist in Birmingham, won a Judicial Review, which said that primary care trusts (PCTs) were wrong to insist a clause in the NHS dental contracts allowing them to terminate the contract without cause or notice.

The DH battled it out in the High Court, saying that health bosses needed such a power. If it is successful, the service may be extended to other areas across the country. For more information, see www.php.nhs.uk

New member

The Chief Dental Officer, Barry Cockroft, has been invited to join the new strategic group that will oversee all medical education and training in England – Medical Education Education (MEE). The group was formed following recommendations by Sir John Tooke’s Inquiry into Modernising Medical Careers and was endorsed by Lord Darzi in his NHS Next Stage Review. MDE will coordinate a major restructuring of postgraduate training for dentists, doctors and other healthcare professions, and will also carry out national-level scrutiny of workforce planning, and the commissioning of education and training by strategic health authorities.

More complaints

The Dental Complaints Service (DCS) logged 1,227 complaints in October and 158 complaints in November last year. For January–November 2008, the DCS logged 1,501 complaints, an increase of nine per cent over the same period in 2007. The average number of complaints logged since the DCS was launched in May 2006 is around 32 per week.

www.dental-tribune.co.uk

Standing ovation

It’s been one big emotional roller coaster for Dr Eddie Crouch lately. Here he speaks exclusively on why he continued to fight the good fight. Two sides

The two clinical endodontic questions continue to cause much controversy in the profession. Dr Richard Mounce explains why.

Mouthwash link with cancer

Mouthwashes containing alcohol can cause oral cancer and should be removed from supermarket shelves, a dental health study claims.

The news, which was revealed as Dental Tribune was going to press reports sufficient scientific evidence that such mouthwashes contribute to an increased risk of the disease.

The ethanol in mouthwash is thought to allow cancer-causing substances to permeate the lining of the mouth.

Michael McCullough, associate professor of oral medicine at the University of Melbourne, Australia, who led the study, said: ‘We see people with oral cancer who have no other risk factors than the use of mouthwash containing alcohol, so what we’ve done is review all the evidence.’

‘Since this article, further evidence has come out, too. We believe there should be warnings. If it was a facial cream that had the effect of reducing acne but had a four to fivefold increased risk of skin cancer, no-one would be recommending it.’

Professor McCullough, chair of the Australian Dental Association’s therapeutics committee, said the alcohol in mouthwashes increases the permeability of the mucous membrane to other carcinogens, such as nicotine.

A toxic breakdown product of alcohol called acetaldehyde that may accumulate in the oral cavity...
Political gripes, dental dilemmas, guest comments, general feedback... We want to hear them all.

Petty egos

Your article about the BMA trying to ban use of the title ‘Dr’ raises eyebrows. I trained in South Africa where BDS and MBCh students follow the same core training (full anatomy, histology, physiology, biochemistry, genetics, microbiology, haematology, immunology, microbiology including parasitology, general medicine, general surgery, general anaesthesiology, general pharmacology), until the groups split up to specialise in Dentistry and Maxillofacial Surgery (BDS) or General Medicine and General Surgery (MBChB) respectively.

Post graduate Maxillofacial and General Surgery is a dental speciality in South Africa and other countries, unlike in the UK where it is essentially a medical or so-called ‘double qualification’ speciality.

Perhaps the argument says something about the level of UK Dental School training, I do not know. I think I speak for most colleagues from overseas who earned and deserve the entitlement to the salutation of ‘Dr’. We are not about to be stripped of our academic achievements lying down.

In my opinion, the public are more likely to be misled by a PhD in Chemistry calling themselves ‘Dr’ than by a Dentist with a BDS or MBChB qualification who is indeed a health professional of equal status to our medical colleagues.

This is nothing more than an age-old argument driven by ego-centric motives rather than the often purported ‘need to protect the public’. In my experience, the public are not as foolish as they are portrayed, and will not walk into my practice seeking e.g. dermatological treatment just because I use the title ‘Dr’. It is also NOT in my best interest to mislead potential clients in adverts or on my door sign because I just would not attract the business that I would be looking for, i.e. dental patients!

In summary, there really is no competition between the professions because we offer different specialist services from each other there therefore is no need for petty rivalry.

Dr Mairosi

Mouthwash link with cancer

Dr Gregory, a former dental public health consultant for NHS Fife, Scotland, is a fellow of the Faculty of Public Health, Royal College of Physicians and a member of the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Dr Gregory said: ‘I am tremendously excited by this award, it is always a great privilege to be recognised for the work that you do and this is a really fitting ending to a wonderful few months.’

More Honours for the profession

Ms Harris, who has just taken up her post as Deputy Chief Dental Officer at the Department of Health, has been awarded an OBE for her services to the NHS.

New president for the BSDHT

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In summary, there really is no competition between the professions because we offer different specialist services from each other therefore there is no need for petty rivalry.

Dr Sae Gregory is awarded an OBE

Sae Gregory, a general dental practitioner in Newcastle and Gateshead was awarded an OBE for services to the NHS, for the last two years in her capacity as president-elect, to ensure a smooth and successful handover.

Ms Harris told BSDHT members when she took over the presidency ‘I sincerely believe that the success of your society should never be down to... a particular presidency, rather that it evolves itself if there is a genuine connection.

‘If patients are in any doubt about using mouthwash, they should consult their dentists.’

Dr Nigel Carter, the chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, rejected the findings and said: ‘A recent, and more thorough review of all available evidence carried out by leading experts on behalf of the foundation concluded there were no proven links between alcohol-containing mouthwashes and increased incidence of mouth cancer. The public should not worry.’

Last night, a spokeswoman for Johnson & Johnson Ltd UK, the manufacturer of Listerine, said: ‘There is no scientific evidence to support an association between the use of alcohol-containing mouthwashes, such as Listerine, and an increased risk of oral cancer.’

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