The Department of Health is funding research to determine whether dental treatment is a risk factor for variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD).

The first year of the research study will be carried out at the National Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Surveillance Unit (NCJDSU) in Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow Dental Hospital and School.

The study has the support of the NHS, Chief Dental Officers, British Dental Association, General Dental Council and defence societies.

Serbija Kaur, head of quality and standards from the Department of Health’s dental team said: ‘The aim of the study is to determine whether there are any temporal and geographic vCJD infection patterns that would indicate that dental surgery and treatment is a risk factor in cross infection when compared with a control (non-infected) cohort.’

He added: ‘Of primary interest are surgical/invasive procedures, although all types of treatment will be recorded. Information gathered from cases and controls will be collected by a dental professional on a standardised data collection form by attending dental practices or requesting copies of full treatment histories. Incomplete or unavailable dental histories will be accessed through the NHS dental payment scheme.’

Researchers will carry out statistical analysis and compare results to determine whether there is a link between dental treatment and vCJD.

All dental professionals must have adequate insurance

The consultation can be completed online at www.gdc-uk.org/ by following the links on the ‘Current consultations’ page of the GDC’s website.

The consultation will close on Friday March 6, 2009.

European guide for dentists

The Council of European Dentists (CED) has updated its guide on the training and work requirements for dental professionals wanting to work in other EU member states.

The latest edition of the EU Manual of Dental Practice looks at the legal and ethical regulations, professional indemnity insurance held by a professional or their employer or NHS indemnity.

This professional requirement has been in place for many years and is currently upheld through the GDC’s fitness to practise procedures.

It is now looking at using new powers to make legally binding rules about ‘adequate and appropriate insurance’ by law so patients can claim compensation if they need to, according to a new proposal by the General Dental Council.

The General Dental Council (GDC) is currently carrying out an indemnity consultation.

The consultation can be completed online at www.gdc-uk.org/ by following the links on the ‘Current consultations’ page of the GDC’s website.

The consultation will close on Friday March 6, 2009.

BSDHT Oral Health Conference

Nearly a thousand people turned up to the recent annual conference held by the British Society of Dental Hygiene & Therapy.

Delegates took part in over 14 workshops and visited 57 trade stands at the BSDHT annual oral health conference and exhibition held at the International Conference Centre in Edinburgh.

A BSDHT spokeswoman said: ‘This was the most well attended BSDHT conference to date reflecting UK dental hygienists and therapists’ passion and dedication for their profession.’

She added: ‘A very tangible two-day filing was sandwiched between the official opening by Margie Taylor, Chief Dental Officer of Scotland and General Dental Council president, Dr Helen Mathewson, whose closing clarified the Council’s role in dentistry and how its decisions would impact on the professional lives of this group of DCP (Dental Care Professionals) registrants.’

The seminars, which were spread over two days, included clinical workshops ranging from paediatric dentistry to dealing with the problems associated with an ageing population plus sessions on legal and ethical dilemmas and professional governance. The 2009 conference will be on 16-17 October 2009 at the Bournemouth International Conference Centre.