£500k funding for tackling dental phobia

The Peninsula Dental School has been awarded £500,000 by the University of Plymouth to spend on finding out how virtual reality can be used to tackle dentist phobia.

The dental school plans to spend the money on three areas of research.

The first area of research will examine the extent to which virtual reality and psychological approaches could be used to tackle dental anxiety both before and during treatment.

The second will examine whether cutting-edge technology in oral health, including the review of published evidence and the creation of new approaches to understanding the complexity of dental research data.

The third area of research will consider nanotechnology, toxicology and dentistry. Nano-powders and nanotechnology are used widely in the latest generation of dental filling materials.

They are also found in the surfaces of implants, dental tissue engineering and toothpastes and their use has been driven by the demand for materials that are aesthetically pleasing and the desire to move away from a reliance on mercury containing materials such as dental amalgam.

However, there is a fear that engineered nanomaterials may act as endocrine disruptors, could be genotoxic (which means that they could affect the integrity of cells which in some cases are mutagenic or carcinogenic) and may prove to be toxic to the wider environment.

This area of research will consider the issues in conjunction with the European Centre for the Environment and Human Health, which is part of the Peninsula Medical School.

David Moles, professor of Oral Health Services Research and director of Postgraduate Education and Research at the Peninsula Dental School, said: “We have chosen three areas of research that require additional and focused study, and which will ultimately be benefi
to dental practitioners and their patients.

“We are very grateful to the University of Plymouth for this funding and we look forward to working with researchers there to pursue these areas of study.”

Professor Wendy Purcell, vice-chancellor and chief executive of the University of Plymouth, commented: “Our ongoing support stands testa
to the excellence of the quality of the School’s research and the very real benefits that it affords the health and wealth of the city and the region, includ
ing helping to enable the dental treatment of up to 500 NHS pa
tients a day at our training sites in Plymouth.

“The University is proud to be founding partner of the School and through this investment, continue to play an important part in funding vital research.”

Endodontic specialist to speak at May conference

International endodontic spe
cialist Dr Julian Webber will be among the speakers lectur
ing at this year’s 2010 Clinical In
donations Conference.

The Clinical Innovations Conference hosted by education and training provider, Smile-on, will be held May 7-8 at the Royal College of Physicians, Regent’s Park, London.

Dr Webber’s contribution to the conference, which is now in its seventh successful year, will be a lecture on the Management of Endodontic Failure.

The lecture will focus on common reasons for endodontic fail
ture, and come up with sugges
tions for addressing these issues - helping practitioners ensure successful outcomes with tooth retention as the primary goal.

Dr Webber is internationally renowned for his knowledge and understanding of endodontic pro
cedures, and has lectured around the world.

CDO opens two IOW practices

The Chief Dental Officer has officially opened two NHS dental practices on the Isle of Wight, giving 12,000 more people access to treatment.

The practices, Cross Street Dental Centre in Ryde; and White
cross Dental Care in Freshwater, are the result of a joint venture between NHS Isle of Wight and Integrated Dental Holdings.

Barry Cockcroft, Chief Dental Officer at the Depart
ment of Health officially opened both practices.

Caroline Morris, senior commission
ning manager for primary care at Isle of Wight NHS, said: “Over the past four years we have invested more than £4m in dental services for people on the Isle of Wight, which has almost doubled the level of NHS dental provision on the Island.

“In 2006 we were reaching only 26 per cent of the Island population. We are now reaching 50 per cent and are aiming for a further ten per cent in the next year.”

She added: “It is really impor
tant for the public to know how to access NHS dentistry, and who to contact should they require advice or emergency treatment.

“The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Dental Helpline can pro
duce information and advice on all aspects of NHS dental care.”

Apprentice star entertains Oxfordshire dentist group

Oxfordshire Private Den

tist’s group, Oxident, cer
bated a hugely suc
cessful year with a complemen
tary Christmas Dinner in the historic surroundings of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

The evening began in the Old Library with a delightful drinks reception enlivened by the mystery of magician Simon Evans, with snow falling gen
tly outside the members and their guests sat down to dinner in the banqueting hall, follow
ng which they were entertained by Debra Barr, semi-finalist in this year’s BBC series of The Apprentice. Debra gave every
one a fascinating look behind the scenes of a reality TV show as well as giving us some useful tips on looking after a small business when the economic climate is as harsh as the English winter.

The group has grown throughout the 2009 and now numbers more than 90 mem
bers who meet for five full-day seminars each year. This year’s subjects ranged from a medico
legal update day, diagnosis and treatments for addressing these issues - helping practitioners ensure successful outcomes with tooth retention as the primary goal.

He is a former president of the British Endodonti
c Society, as well as a member of the American Association of Endodontists and the European Society of Endodontology amongst others.

As well as teaching endo
dontic techniques at the Pacific Endodontic Research Founda
tion in California, Guys Hospital and the Eastman Dental School in London, Dr Webber is also the man behind the Harley Street Centre for Endodontics, a pur
pose built state of the art clinical teaching facility, which opened in 2002.

For dental professionals eager to hear more about how to make endodontic procedures more successful in their surgery, the lecture is a must-see and also provides certifiable CPD hours.

For more information on the 2010 Clinical Innovations Conference call 020 7400 8989, alternatively email info@smile
on.com.
Editorial comment
Always look on the bright side of life

It seems that the doom and gloom that has beset the country is slowly beginning to lift. No, I'm not talking about that bastion of British whinging – the weather, we'll need at least until May for that – rather the economic climate. Figures released by the Office of National Statistics has shown that the economy grew by 0.1 per cent in the last quarter of 2009. While it's not quite time to run about the streets cheering, this does mean that it may be time to quietly plan for more optimistic times ahead.

There has been more positive news in the profession as well – half a million pounds of funding into the use of virtual reality and nanotechnology in dentistry given to the Peninsula Dental School; a new dental school in Scotland; new dental practices opening in the Isle of Wight – it looks like a new year and a new decade has seen the turnaround into a more positive outlook, and long may it continue.

Also looking into the future, careers in dentistry are taking centre stage with the holding of a live Q&A session discussing careers in dentistry and the upcoming Career Opportunities in UK Dentistry conference next week.

Don't forget to visit my fundraising site – www.justgiving.com/bukumbibound – to find out more about how I will be supporting the work of Bridge2Aid in the Tanzanian village of Bukumbi and to help by donating.

NEW

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Civil litigation report welcomed

Unsuccessful defendants should no longer have to pay ‘After the Event Insurance’ and success fees, according to proposals in a final report into civil litigation costs.

The Medical Defence Union (MDU), has welcomed the Right Honourable Lord Justice Jackson’s final report into civil litigation costs and claims it will improve the civil litigation process for claimants and defendants.

MDU head of claims, Jill Harding, said: “In our response to Lord Justice Jackson’s 2009 review of claims costs, we suggested a number of reforms which we believe are necessary to restore fairness and balance to the civil litigation procedures.

“We are delighted that many of these seem to have been proposed.

“We are particularly pleased that he has recommended unsuccessful defendants no longer have to pay for ‘After the Event Insurance’ and success fees which have contributed to the disproportionate costs faced by defendants, including MDU doctors and dentists.

Lord Justice Jackson in his report accepted the need for wholesale reform of costs management including the time spent on a case and solicitors’ hourly rates.

The report also recommends that specialist judges manage and try clinical negligence cases to ensure better cost and case management.

“For example, in the MDU’s experience, success fees can double claimants’ costs.”

Dental Protection communications manager David Groser commented: “Dental Protection welcomes the final report of Lord Justice Jackson on civil litigation costs.

“Lord Justice Jackson consulted widely during the consultation process and DPL together with its medical colleagues within MPS made two submissions and also provided data to the review team; we believe that the report represents a fair and balanced review of costs. The report includes specific recommendations for clinical negligence litigation including removing the obligation that the losing defendant must pay the claimant’s after-the-event insurance cover and success fees. Although DPL takes a firm stance when negotiating costs after settlement of a claim, these additional costs can sometimes double the costs which must be paid and this is necessarily reflected in the subscriptions charged to dental members.

“We would like to see the government bring forward legislation to implement these important changes. It would be a real shame if the momentum for reform of civil litigation costs was lost in the run up to a general election.”

Criminal litigation report welcomed

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Unsuccessful defendants should no longer have to pay ‘After the Event Insurance’ and success fees, according to proposals in a final report into civil litigation costs.

A dentist who conned patients out of thousands of pounds for fillings they didn’t need has been struck off by the General Dental Council.

Dr Constantine Saridakis, who worked at the Birchwood Dental Practice in Lincoln, was found guilty of 10 incidents of giving unnecessary treatment between May 2007 and March 2008.

In a number of cases, he recommended multiple fillings on patients who actually had no tooth decay. His partner gave a second opinion on some the cases, often finding no decay.

When confronted, Dr Saridakis allegedly said: “Sometimes I’m preventative, and sometimes I’m in a money-making mood.”

Dr Saridakis was suspended from NHS Lincolnshire’s dental performers list last April. However, he still treated two children then backdated the paperwork.

Two dental nurses voiced their suspicions when patients with healthy teeth were informed they needed fillings.