Dental Tribune speaks to Raj Rattan about his involvement in the development of Clinical Governance Progress Management and how it can save practices valuable time

Clinical Governance has been gathering momentum in practice thinking over the last 18 months or so. With it being a requirement of the NHS contract, and the upcoming strategies that the Care Quality Commission will be putting in place, the reality is now for practices and PCTs to ensure their CG procedures are in order.

One of the PCTs who has been more forward thinking about how they ensure compliance with CG is Bromley. Starting in 2005, the PCT had been running an Excel-based programme whereby they could measure consistently practices’ performance in the different areas of CG and identify the gaps.

Ambitious project
This is where Raj came in. Raj Rattan is a practitioner based in West Wickham and a graduate of the Care Quality Commission of the time. Raj had finalised his ideas and was ready to do. "What was very interesting was the existence, so my work with the Clinical Governance CD was already in place and I had been working on this for a number of years before the PCT had asked me to come up with a programme which the PCT could use as well as allowing the PCT to analyse what was going on. It was all built in Excel; the outcome was that it would generate a series of graphs which would show how practices were in each of the domains and how much each practice still needed to do."

It was the chance that Raj had finalised his ideas and was scheduled to present them to the PCT as Bromley’s lead on CG, Harry Goldingay, had spoken to Smile-on, a provider of online Clinical Governance programmes, about a new online CG programme. Raj said: "I gave my presentation on the Excel-based programme I had been working on and Harry commented to me that this is really interesting as what you’ve shown us I think would fit nicely with a call I had this afternoon from both practices and the PCT and their programme. This then lead to a meeting between the PCT and the company and I was asked to present my Excel ‘product’.

"What we now have is CGPM, which allows dentists to log in and carry out a short visit unless they had been to the practice in the previous six months. It’s a very structured way of doing an updated infection control and supportive way because we weren’t as bothered about the items that had been scored, we could easily sort themselves. For example, if an item hadn’t scored against item x, then we could say that we weren’t as bothered about item x as a minor protocol (eg the placing of a Health & Safety poster) that the practice could easily sort themselves. It’s important, but not as important as say not taking a medical history for a patient. So by having the criteria and weighing them we were able to get a score. Following feedback we then did some joint work on what is now called CGPM. The static product in the Clinical Governance CD was already in existence, so my work with the PCT on my spreadsheet was the bridge between what Smile-on had and what Bromley PCT wanted to do.

"What we now have is CGPM, which allows dentists to log in and sort out their assessment. This will have been visited by the end of March 2013. We will then move into the next development phase of the system which will be to review the current standards and adapt them, as necessary, in order to support Bromley providers to meet their CG (Care Quality Commission) Registration requirements in April 2017."

Raj is deservedly proud of what has been achieved. "This has been terrific: for me personally - I love working on new projects and I always felt where the hard bit of governance was actually doing the gap analysis; also measuring the improvement of practices. How I feel about it is as an individual, in the end it is probably the same as a practitioner; and if you look at this picture then it hangs on someone’s wall. I think actually seeing it, live and functional, having started to sketch it out literally on the back of an envelope - it’s fantastic.

Personal thanks
"A personal huge thanks to the PCT who gave me the freedom to develop my idea and allowed me the time to develop it properly. This has been a great example of teamwork between practitioners, a PCT and an IT company. Also, I’d like to acknowledge the LDC for their support during the rollout and a big thank you to all the practices who have worked with Bromley for their engagement."

It has been a two-year jour-ney for Raj and Smile-on to get to where they are today. For the PCT, Jill Webb and Harry Goldingay said: "The PCT is delighted that all practices agreed to adopt the CGPM, which enabled all parties to build upon previous work. We are now working with Smile-on to ensure that every aspect of the system is working smoothly. We shall then move into the next development phase of the system which will be to review the current standards and adapt them, as necessary, in order to support Bromley providers to meet their CG (Care Quality Commission) Registration requirements in April 2017."