Parliamentary group

An all-party Parliamentary group has been formed to ‘promote a greater understanding of dentistry’. The group which is chaired by MP Charlotte Atkins, Labour MP for Staffordshire Moorlands and vice president of the British Fluoridation Society, is planning to visit dental practices to enable practitioners to talk about the issues that really matter to them and their patients. The group will also look at best practice, hold themed meetings and public debates.

Part of its role will be to monitor the progress of the Health Select Committee’s recommendations for NHS dental services while investigating and raising awareness of oral health issues in general.

More complaints

The Dental Complaints Service (DCS) has seen complaints increase by eight per cent. The DCS logged 1,164 complaints in December 2008. For January – December 2008, the DCS logged 1,647 complaints, an increase of eight per cent over the equivalent period in 2007. The average number of complaints logged since the launch of the DCS in May 2006 is now approximately 32 per week.

A breakdown of the type of complaints made revealed that the highest number concerned indi-
rect coronal restorations. Proth-
otics were the second most popular reason for complaint followed by direct coronal restora-
tions. There were no complaints concern-
ing treatment of patients with special needs.

Health award

Pupils at a school in Halifax in Cornwall, had an operation to remove her milk teeth after she continued to refuse to eat any solid food and only took small amounts of yoghurt, fruit and ‘build up’ drinks.

Dr Cockcroft condemns survey

The survey for Which? magazine found eight per cent have tried DIY dentistry and the same amount of people knew someone else who had tried it.

Around a quarter of those had attempted to remove a tooth with pliers. Three in 10 had tried to whiten their own teeth using household products, while 12 per cent had attempted to take a tooth out using a string tied to a door handle.

The survey revealed that DIY techniques included fixing crowns with household glue, bursting ulcers with a pin and sticking down loose fillings with chewing gum.

However Dr Cockcroft criticised the survey and questioned its credibility.

He said: ‘These findings come from an online multiple choice survey that has no statistical credibility. It is ludicrous to sug-
gest that three million people are doing DIY dentistry. DIY dentistry is dangerous and unnecessary. Thanks to our investment of over £2 billion in NHS dentistry, there are now lots of new NHS dental practices expanding and opening around the country.’

Shadow health minister Mike Penning called the survey results ‘a direct consequence of the in-
trduction of Labour’s botched dental contract’.

Health trauma leads to death

A week later Sophie was so emaciated, her hair was falling out and they could see her spine through her back. She weighed less than four stone when she died.

Paediatric pathologist Dr Marie Ann Brundler said Sophie died on December 2, 2005 from acute renal failure caused by starvation and dehydration.

Dr Brundler said she would have expected a health profes-
"sional to have noticed Sophie’s emaciated state had they seen her before she died.

The inquest heard that al-
though Sophie lost 1 kg in the four weeks before her death her parents, Janet Waller, a nursery teacher, and her husband Richard, a taxi driver, did not take her back to see a doctor.

They told the hearing they rang the hospital but were told by a nurse not to bring Sophie in as she was now under the care of a community child psych-
ologist.

Dr. Howard Stean

Clinician, author and tutor

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Dental trauma leads to death

A 12-year-old girl starved herself to death after developing a fear of dentists, an inquest heard.

Sophie Waller, from St Dennis in Cornwall, had an operation to remove her milk teeth after she stopped eating or speaking, after cracking a tooth on a boiled sweet.

She refused to go to the den-
tist to be treated for toothache be-
cause her tongue had been nicked on a previous visit to the dentist.

Doctors took the decision to remove all eight of her milk teeth so she would not have to undergo repeat operations and suffer more psychological trauma.

Her parents Janet and Richard, claimed this decision was taken without their consent and left their daughter ‘devastated’.

When she was discharged she continued to refuse to eat any solid food and only took small amounts of yoghurt, fruit and ‘build up’ drinks.

The Chief Dental Officer for England has condemned a survey, claiming 5m peo-
ple in the UK have tried DIY den-
tistry, as ‘ludicrous’.

The survey for Which? maga-
zine found eight per cent have tried DIY dentistry and the same amount of people knew someone else who had tried it.

Around a quarter of those had attempted to remove a tooth with pliers. Three in 10 had tried to whiten their own teeth using household products, while 12 per cent had attempted to take a tooth out using a string tied to a door handle.

The survey revealed that DIY techniques included fixing crowns with household glue, bursting ulcers with a pin and sticking down loose fillings with chewing gum.

Which? carried out the poll to publicise more detailed research it is carrying out into the state of dentistry in the UK.

It is asking members of the public to submit their own ex-
periences of dental treatment to collate evidence which will be submitted as part of a Government review in April.

Which? polled 2,651 adults aged over 16 in England online from January 19 to February 4 2009. It extrapolated the figures to suggest that three million peo-
ple have tried DIY dentistry.

However Dr Cockcroft criti-
cised the survey and questioned its credibility.

He said: ‘These findings come from an online multiple choice survey that has no statistical credibility. It is ludicrous to sug-
gest that three million people are doing DIY dentistry. DIY dentistry is dangerous and unnecessary. Thanks to our investment of over £2 billion in NHS dentistry, there are now lots of new NHS dental practices expanding and opening around the country.’

Shadow health minister Mike Penning called the survey results ‘a direct consequence of the in-
trduction of Labour’s botched dental contract’.