Polish dental tourism expands

British-Polish medical tourism provider, StatMedica, has added a new dental clinic in the outskirts of Warsaw to its portfolio. The company now claims to be able to expand on its ability to offer high quality dental care at some of the most competitive prices in Europe, with dental implants starting at £480, crowns starting at £200 and veneers starting at £250. These prices, it says, ‘are approximately 70 per cent less than the typical price of treatment in the UK’.

Low-cost flights from cities across the United Kingdom to destinations across Poland and affordable hotel accommodation in Poland ensure that significant cost-savings can apparently be made by travelling to Poland. Alison Hope, director of StatMedica’s London office said: ‘The cost savings that can be made by travelling to Poland for dental treatment are immense even once you factor in the cost of flights and accommodation’.

But BDHF advises against

However the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) has backed a ‘Which?’ report advising against going for medical treatments abroad. It has urged members of the public not to travel abroad for dental treatment after a report by consumer advice group found that almost one in five medical tourists suffer problems after treatment.

The BDHF was speaking after the report revealed that more than a quarter of patients travelling abroad for medical treatment did not feel they received the follow-up care they needed, while further 18 per cent reported complications. The survey follows a recent warning against dental tourism by the Foundation after a number of callers to its free Dental Helpline service (0845 063 1188) reported that they did not know how to resolve problems that followed dental treatment undertaken outside of the UK.

De Carter, chief executive of the Foundation, commented: ‘It is a big concern that UK patients are so willing to travel abroad for dental treatment without being fully aware of the risks. Not all dentists are as highly trained as those in the UK, where extensive training and strict examinations are undertaken to ensure they meet the high standards required and this also applies to foreign dentists practising in the UK.’

So-called ‘dental holidays’ are presented as a cheap and hassle free alternative to getting treatment in this country but we know from calls to our Dental Helpline that if things do go wrong then they are anything but, as patients can be left facing all sorts of questions; am I likely to fly back? What are my legal rights as a foreign patient? Am I prepared to go through the courts? Do I have the money required to correct the treatment in this country? []

Dentists asking for retired list

The Dental Practitioners Association (DPA) has backed Baroness Gardner of Parkes, who is seeking to amend the forthcoming Health and Social Care Bill to enable retired dentists to stay on the General Dental Council (GDC) Register at a nominal cost and without CPD requirements. The baroness is herself a retired dentist.

During the second reading of the Bill in the House of Lords on March 25, 2008, she said ‘This lack of distinction between the honourable and the dishonourable absence from the register is invidious and has upset many dentists…

There is a public interest in non-practising dentists remaining on the list, as many non-practising dentists continue to work on boards, trusts, charities and other bodies, public and private. If they claim to have been dentists with an honourable record, it should be verifiable’.

Baroness Gardner is appealing to interested dentists to write to their MPs in April supporting her amendment, which will enable the GDC to set up a separate list for dentists not currently practising. At present, dentists who retire and do not wish to keep up with the requirements for CPD and pay the £438 registration fee are struck off.

‘This is what I object to the most’, said Baroness Gardner speaking to the DPA, ‘You get a letter saying you have been struck off after a lifetime of honourable service. It is the same whether you are a retired dentist or have been struck off for malpractice’. The DPA believes that all dental professionals have a right to appear on the GDC register as a right by virtue of their qualifications—except those who have been moved on disciplinary grounds. []

Record entries for the student technician award

Congratulations go to Rachel McMichan on winning the 2008 British Orthodontic Society (BOS) student technician award.

Rachel received her award at the Orthodontic Technicians Association (OTA) annual conference in Edinburgh which took place on March 14–16, 2008, from David Bearn, chairman of the BOS scholarship & grants committee.

This year’s competition attracted a record number of entries and the judges had a very difficult time selecting the winner.

The entrants were required to prepare a removable appliance to a given prescription, and Rachel’s imaginative use of colour in the baseplate certainly stood out. The entrants also had to design and produce an appliance to achieve certain tooth movements and present a written commentary on the rationale for the design chosen.

Rachel’s prize was a complimentary conference package to attend the OTA conference in Edinburgh, along with a cheque from the BOS. []

Rachel’s patriotic baseplate design

Rachel McMichan receives her award from David Bearn

DPA’s Derek Watson backs call for dentists to remain on GDC list after retirement

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