Don’t miss CIC!

Dental professionals are being urged to book their places now at the Clinical Innovations Conference and Annenberg Lecture 2009.

The joint endeavour from Smile-on and Alpha Omega is expected to be very popular.

The Clinical Innovations Conference (CIC) takes place on 15–16 May at the Royal College of Physicians, Regent’s Park, London.

Professor Nitzan Bichacho, a worldwide authority on aesthetic and implant dentistry and Dr Devo- rah Schwartz-Arad, a specialist in oral and maxillofacial surgery, will be presenting the lecture ‘Success factors in dental implantation: a multi-disciplinary approach between the surgeon and the prosthodontist’.

On 16 May, there will be an impressive programme of lectures including presentations and hands-on sessions from Professor Nasser Burghi, head of the division of aesthetic dentistry in the Department of Restorative Dentistry at the San Antonio Dental School, leading expert in tooth whitening technology Dr Wyman Chan, a specialist in orthodontics and Dr Siria Mirfendereski.

Other speakers include Professor Eddie Scher, Dr Chris Orr and Professor Liviu Steier.

Delegates will earn Continuing Professional Development hours, making this event an invaluable educational experience.

For more information and to reserve your place, call 020 7400 8989 or email info@smile-on.com.

New e-learning solution showing dentists how to give good oral dental advice to their patients has been unveiled.

The two-hour programme, Prevention in Practice: Using Delivering Better Oral Health, was launched by Smile-on at the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry (BASCD) conference in Manchester.

Janelle Montgomery, project manager at Smile-on, said: ‘The e-learning package can either be downloaded online or bought as a CD-ROM. It supports dentists in implementing the Delivering Better Oral Health toolkit, which was sent to all NHS practices in England in 2007, by the Department of Health.

The programme aims to improve knowledge and understanding, and help consistent and effective delivery of evidence-based health messages by the dental team.

The learning package can either be downloaded online or bought as a CD-ROM.

With the programme, dental professionals will be able to provide evidence-based health care interventions that impact on oral and general health and promote behaviour change in patients to improve self-care.

The programme is for all dental professionals from dentists to orthodontists to hygienists.

For more information on the programme, call 020 7400 8989 or email info@smile-on.com.

Don’t miss CIC!

Better oral health solutions

Revitalising ageing teeth

NovaMin products revitalise ageing teeth, decreases sensitivity, eliminates white spots and decreases inflammation, according to research.

Dental treatment is undergoing a transformation worldwide and dental patients are more demanding and know what they want.

They are asking for minimal intervention therapies that conserve tooth and periodontal structures.

Fig. 1 Miradent nanosensitive hca dentifrice powered by NovaMin.

A spokeswoman for dental company, Hager & Werken GmbH, said: ‘This is an excellent opportunity for the dentist. New therapies are now available which address these health issues.

NovaMin therapy uses a clinically proven ingredient, calcium sodium phosphosilicate, made from the same naturally occurring sodium phosphosilicate, made from the same naturally occurring ingredients. It is recommended after tooth cleaning and periodontal treatment when sensitivity often increases.

Calcium sodium phosphosilicate has been used to repair bone since the late 1960s. More recently, researchers have adapted the same technology for tooth remineralization.’

She added: ‘NovaMin therapy is ideal for this function. Demineralization is stopped, white spots are eliminated, and the sealed dentin stops sensitivity. An added benefit of the NovaMin particle is its antibacterial effect on oral microorganisms, leading to enhanced gingival health.

Hager & Werken GmbH has launched two new products in their Miradent prophylaxis line that use the innovative NovaMin technology: Miradent nanosensitive hca is a NovaMin containing dentifrice for at-home treatment. Clinical studies have shown a 90 per cent reduction in sensitivity, durable remineralization and long-term protection of hard tissue surfaces.

Miradent nanosensitive hca dental-kit was developed for in-office treatment of patients with acute sensitivity. This product delivers the same NovaMin technology at a higher dose for professional application. It is recommended after tooth cleaning and periodontal treatment when sensitivity often increases.

GDC calls for views

The General Dental Council (GDC) has launched an open consultation to form a Specialist List for the treatment of individuals wanting to undertake training to carry out a specialist function. A specialist List indicates registered dentists who meet certain conditions and are entitled to use a specialist title. A dentist does not have to be entered onto a Specialist List to carry out the practice of any particular speciality; but may only use the title ‘specialist’ if they are on the list.

To ensure standards have been achieved, anyone on the Specialist List has had appropriate training in an area where there is a demand for specialist skills and expertise to meet current needs.

The Specialist Lists indicate registered general dental practitioners who meet certain conditions and are entitled to use a specialist title. A dentist does not have to be entered onto a Specialist List to carry out the practice of any particular speciality; but may only use the title ‘specialist’ if they are on the list.

You can also email: alittle@gdc-uk.org or write to: Amanda Little, Consultation on Specialist Lists, General Dental Council, 57 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8QD.

The biggest increase will be in Chippenham where NHS Wiltshire plans to increase the number of NHS dentists in Wiltshire.

The extra provision will be in towns in Wiltshire including Calne, Chippenham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Pewsey, Tidworth and Wootton Bassett.

NHS Wiltshire, which commissions dental services, is negotiating with existing practices in Calne, Devizes, Marlborough and Pewsey, to take on the extra NHS work. It is also hoping to attract new practices in Chippenham, Malmesbury, Wootton Bassett and Tidworth.

The extra money will be used from April for the coming year.

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In Wootton Bassett the plan is to increase NHS dentists in Wiltshire.

The programme highlights the importance of communication skills when treating patients and looks at interventions dental professionals should take to improve patients’ oral and general health.

It also looks at patient self-care and how practitioners can raise self-care issues with patients. This includes oral health messages as well as advising patients on healthy diets, sensible drinking, and smoking cessation.

The programme is for all dental professionals from dentists to orthodontists to hygienists.

In Wiltshire, NHS patients will increase from 26 per cent to 35 per cent while in Devizes the number will rise from 25 per cent to 34 per cent.

In Calne it will rise from 78 per cent to 84 per cent.

Janelle Montgomery, project manager at Smile-on, said: ‘Our goal is to provide guidance to training providers on allowing flexible opportunities for those wishing to train as specialists. So, we want to find out whether you agree in principle to making training more flexible. How could we do this? What limits are there? We would like to hear from as wide a range of people as possible, including professionals wanting to undertake training and those who will deliver it.’

The consultation opened on 18 March and will run until 10 June.

The consultation can be found on the GDC website at http://www.gdc-uk.org.

The consultation document and questions can be requested from Amanda Little on 020 7887 5812.

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Guest comment
The way forward

Despite en masse criticism and anger about the new contract the government have described this transitional phase as merely "turbulent times". Recent access data showing a 0.4 per cent (59,000) increase in access have been seized upon by the DH as a sign that the reforms are working, even though the number of patients seen was still 1.1 million (5.9 per cent) fewer than the 2.8 million seen in the two-year period immediately prior to the introduction of the new NHS contract in March 2006.

We all know the NHS is a budgeted system and that if we want to provide work outside of the NHS it must fall under the vain banner of being 'cosmetic', because surely if it is needed the NHS will provide it. DH literature aimed at both patients and dentists is filled with unspecific phrases such as; "In April 2006 the NHS introduced new rules which mean that orthodontic treatment is only given to people who need it for clinical reasons" and my personal favourite is the term 'clinically necessary'.

The words 'clinically necessary' and 'clinical reasons' seem to be an interpretation for 'working within a budget', so why is the DH reluctant to talk to patients and dentists about the reality of working within a budget? Are we now as a profession surely to believe that children who fall outside of the IOTN requirements do not clinically need orthodontic treatment, unless their parents have the means to go private? Whilst I agree that funding needs to be rationed so that the optimum number of people can benefit from the NHS, where is the honesty about the real financial reasons behind why these decisions have been made?

In my recent interview with CDO Barry Cockcroft I asked him what NHS dentistry is aiming to provide. I was given a barrage of friendly sounding words such as clinical effective and evidence and outcome-based treatment. But after probing a little bit further I was told "It's about clinical and cost effectiveness, and that's a judgment dentists have to make." Initially this sounds like a nice non-specific phrase which with simple treatment makes a lot of sense; why should the NHS provide white fillings on back teeth when silver metal ones will suffice at a fraction of the cost? But what about more complicated treatments? Can we really have a situation where all treatments are both clinically and cost effective?

In many cases certain treatment options such as large span fixed bridges or implants can be very clinically effective but a removable partial denture may be the most cost effective option. So surely now is the time the DH opens a proper dialogue about how the NHS can provide more complex treatments or are we stealthily moving to a basic core system where the emphasis on seeing more and more patients to improve statistics is given priority over providing high level care to the whole population? Whatever the case lets hope the DH starts to give clear guidance as to the direction of NHS dentistry, maybe then NHS dentistry can deliver realistic outcomes based upon realistic aims.

About the author
Neel Kothari
qualified as a dentist from Bristol University Dental School in 2005, and currently works in Cambridge as an associate within the NHS. He has completed a year-long postgraduate certificate in implantology at UCL’s Eastman Dental Institute, and regularly attends postgraduate courses to keep up-to-date with current trends. Immediately post graduation, he was able to work in the older NHS system and see the changes brought about through the introduction of the new NHS system. Like many other dentists, he has concerns for what the future holds within the NHS and as an NHS dentist, appreciates some of the difficulties in providing dental healthcare within this widely criticised system.

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