UK medical experts back periodontal report

Medical experts are urging dentists and physicians to work closer together in an effort to improve the understanding of patient health.

The news follows the latest clinical evidence from a new report which examines the association between periodontitis and systemic conditions.

A UK group of cardiologists, endocrinologists and periodontologists found a potential link between periodontitis and an increased likelihood of CVD.

They also discovered that periodontitis is also an even more severe in subjects with diabetes mellitus and a group already at increased risk for cardiovascular events.

The Potential Impact of Periodontal Disease on General Health represents the first time a broad group of UK experts has convened to explore the growing body of research into this important area.


‘We welcome this new report and it reinforces the current drive for greater emphasis on prevention of ill health and reduction of inequalities of health by the giving of advice and application of evidence-informed actions.

It is important that the whole dental team, as well as other healthcare workers, give consistent messages and that these messages are up to date and correct. This literature review does however identify a lack of prospective studies at this point in time linking periodontal disease with CVD and until such studies have taken place we should be cautious in attributing a causal effect.’

Dr Ray Williams, a USA periodontist, said the promotion of good oral health, as part of better overall health care should be seen as a natural extension of current healthy lifestyle messages around diet, exercise and the cessation of smoking, which are designed to help reduce the burden of CVD and diabetes.

Periodontitis has attracted much interest as a potential risk factor not only for cardiovascular disease (CVD) and diabetes, but also for its association with adverse pregnancy outcomes, respiratory disease, kidney disease and certain cancers.

The interaction of oral health and general health has been recognised in the dental profession for a long time, but doctors especially those in general practice do not recognise the link.

This could change with a recent expert report published in Current Medical Research and Opinion, which examined the potential link between oral hygiene, associated gum disease and other systemic diseases involving inflammatory processes such as CVD and diabetes.

The authors conclude that both doctors and dentists are encouraged in the report to educate patients on the importance of maintaining a healthy mouth for the sake of their general health.