**News**

**Dental Award winners celebrate in style**

The dental profession turned out in style earlier this month with black tie and posh frocks to hear who won what award at this year’s dental awards.

Hassan El-Nashar was delighted to win Dentist of the Year. The team support winners from El-Nashar Dental Care makes sure DTUK’s Joe Ar- pis enjoys the moment!

Lovely Mary picks up her well earned Outstanding Achievement Award.

**Children still waiting for ortho treatment**

Hundreds of children are still waiting for orthodontic treatment. PCT managers are now confident this backlog will soon be cleared.

**Extra dentists for Anglesey**

The local Anglesey health board (LHb) has announced two new contracts to bring extra dentists to the west and east of the island – giving access to local treatment for another 4,000 patients. Back in January 2007, a mere third of Anglesey residents had access to an NHS dentist – forcing patients to travel as far as Liverpool to get treatment. The shortage saw a protest group collect more than 1,000 signatures in just days to voice anger at the massive hole in services. Anglesey LHb’s chief executive Anne John-Davies said: “These additional contracts should help to stabilise the provision of NHS dental services and improve access for members of this community. Work goes on to continually improve the situation and the oral health of the population of Angle- sey.” The local Welsh Assembly member Ieuan Wyn Jones said: “The situation has improved but of course the provision in Anglesey has historically been far worse than in most parts in Wales and more needs to be done to increase access and ensure more NHS dental places.”

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**Children still waiting for ortho treatment**

Hundreds of children in north Cumbria are still waiting orthodontic treatment after services became too full. At the start of the year the backlog was almost at crisis point with 1,000 patients on the waiting list. But the primary care trust (PCT) has announced that two new centres, in Penrith and Cockermouth, have already helped to reduce that to 400.

PCT managers are now confident this backlog will soon be cleared and they are still going about work to prevent similar problems in the future. However, new system means that the Cumberland Infir-mary, Carlisle, will no longer be the first point of contact for new orthodontic patients. Instead they will have to travel to one of the new centres – something some parents in Carlisle may not be able to afford.

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Periodontal disease maybe a ‘silent’ disease but it is a disease that needs radical attention from all. It’s far too easy to deleg-ate the dis-ease to hygien-ists, but clearly the responsibil-ity is too heavy for one pair of shoulders. So who to blame? Well, it’s good pointing the finger at one sector is it; For this is an issue that needs the help from dentists, primary care trusts (PCTs) and all equivalent bodies.

Unsurprisingly periodontal disease is barely recognised in the new contract, and with hygienist treatments costing £50 a go, this is a problem that’s not going anywhere. On top of that, getting an appointment with a local hygienist is like getting a ticket for Glastonbury. If you don’t call way before the plaque builds up, you have to pole-vault the walls to get an appointment.

So with two-thirds of the adult population suffering some form of periodontal dis-ease we could all be donning gummy smiles pretty soon at this rate.

Nevertheless it is a prevent-able disease which does need the active involvement of the patient. But it takes effort and dedication so we have to be re-alist. How many of us can re-ally be bothered to floss day in and day out, followed by a thor-ough gurgling of aggressive mouthwash? It’s just another chore on the ‘to-do’ list that most people are just too tired to cross off.

However, the significance of this condition cannot be ig-nored. And although most of the studies reviewed are small scale, there is emerging, com-pelling evidence of the link be-tween periodontal disease and systemic conditions such as di-a betes and cardio-vascular dis-ease. With the increase in obe-sity, the numbers diagnosed with type-2 diabetes have also risen.

For many years dentists have recognised that diabetics have poorer periodontal health. The key to this new research is that improved periodontal health can lead to better general health. For example, a reduction in periodontal disease for diabetics can lead to a small, but significant improvement in the patients’ blood sugar levels.

When diagnosed with type-2 diabetes patients are sent to an optometrist to check for signs of diabetic retinopathy, a condi-tion which can lead to blind-ness. This (free) check is re-peated annually. Yet how many doctors advise a newly diag-nosed diabetic to seek an as-sessment of their periodontal health from a dentist? And how many doctors double-check that this assessment is repeated annually?

The answer in both cases is probably none; Even with ex-ceptions the patient has to find a dentist, plus an extra £50 for the hygienist the following week.

So one is here now where dentists and doctors should join hands to work this one out. And it’s a good time too for PCTs to of-fer diabetics free annual assess-ments. Enough said. 

There is something to be said when it comes to winning a ‘kosher’ award for being an excep-tional professional (see page two). The Dental Awards continue to grow from strength to strength and is the only respected event that de-serves a whopping applaud. Year after year The Dental Awards are presented in only the best venues, followed by quality cuisine and first class entertainment. This year Fred MacAulay’s humour was in-fectious, while the tenors and divas set a moving atmosphere which was just impossible to ignore. Well done Purple Media Solutions and big congratulations to all you winners. 

Penny Palmer
DTUK editor

Editorial comment
Joining forces

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