Dental Award winners celebrate in style

The dental profession turned out in style earlier this month with black ties 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 DUT UK’s Joe Aspis 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.

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 chief executive Lynne Joannou 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 Anglesey.’ The local Welsh Assembly member Leuan 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.’
Periodontal disease maybe a 'silent' disease but it is a disease that needs radical attention from all. It's far too easy to delegatethe dis-ease to hygienists, but clearly the responsibility is too heavy for one pair of shoulders. So who to blame? Wex'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 disease we could all be donning gummy smiles pretty soon at this rate.

Nevertheless it is a preventable disease which does need the active involvement of the patient. But it takes effort and dedication so we have to be realistic. How many of us can really be bothered to floss day in and day out, followed by a thorough 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 ignored. And although most of the studies reviewed are small scale, there is emerging, compelling evidence of the link between periodontal disease and systemic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. With the increase in obesity, 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 patient's blood sugar levels.

When diagnosed with type-2 diabetes patients are sent to an optometrist to check for signs of diabetic retinopathy, a condition which can lead to blindness. This (free) check is repeated annually. Yet how many doctors advise a newly diagnosed diabetic to seek an assessment 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 exceptions the patient has to find a dentist, plus an extra £50 for the hygienist the following week.

So the time 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 offer diabetics free annual assessments. Enough said.

A genuine reward

There is something to be said when it comes to winning a 'kosher' award for being an exceptional professional (see page two). The Dental Awards continue to grow from strength to strength and is the only respected event that deserves a whopping applause. 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 infectious, 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