Dentists treating children urged to look out for child abuse

A new policy urging dentists to refer cases to child protection services if they have any concerns.

Oral disease can have a significant impact on the health of a child and can cause severe pain, loss of sleep and even reductions in body weight and growth.

Dr Peter Sidebotham from the University of Warwick co-authored the policy document on dental neglect in children for the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry.

He calls for dentists to refer cases to child protection services if they have any concerns.

The report calls for all dental staff to have regular child protection training.

For clinical staff, this must include recognition of signs of abuse and neglect, and how to respond when concerned about a child. This should be a mandatory component of dental training at every level: undergraduate, foundation training, special interest and specialist training, said the report.

To see the full report go to www.bspd.co.uk/publication-27.pdf

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Interim guidance on CBCT scanners

The Health Protection Agency has come up with interim guidance for dentists using or planning to install dental cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) scanners. These CBCT scanners are now being installed and used in a growing number of dental practices within the UK.

There is currently little guidance available for dentists on the different radiation protection requirements needed for this type of radiography equipment.

In a report by the Health Protection Agency (HPA), John Holroyd of the Radiation Protection Division said: “Suitable guidance is urgently needed to ensure that appropriate radiation safety measures are in place for the protection of staff and patients, and to advise practices using CBCT scanners with respect to radiation safety legislation.”

“Working procedures and precautions that are well-established for conventional dental x-ray equipment will in many circumstances not be adequate for CBCT.”

The interim guide, which can be downloaded from the BDA website, looks at how to select appropriate equipment, including the selection of a suitable field of view (FOV), exposure parameters and resolution settings and the establishment of a suitable quality assurance programme to ensure regular testing of the equipment is carried out.

Formal guidance for the UK is expected later this year, following a consultation exercise.

The HPA’s Radiation Protection Division has set up a working party to look into the issues associated with the use of CBCT equipment and the British Dental Association is represented on the working party.

Mr Holroyd said: “However, due to the increasing popularity of CBCT equipment and the current vacuum of official guidance, the HPA felt it was vital to make dentists using or planning to install CBCT equipment aware of the most important issues as soon as possible.”

Distinguished service award for ortho technician

The chief orthodontic technician at the Royal London Hospital has been given the Orthodontic Technician Award for Distinguished Service.

Kieran McLaughlin became the first orthodontic technician to gain an MSc, graduating from the Queen Mary University of London Faculty of Medicine in 1994. Since 1995 he has worked with Dr Ama Johal and Dr Joanna Battagel designing appliances for the treatment of obstructive sleep apnoea; and he has also worked with Dr Neville Bass on developing the Dynamax appliance.

David Bearn, chair of the Scholarships and Grants Committee of the BOS commented: “The Committee conferred the 2009 Award on Kieran McLaughlin in recognition of the huge and on-going contribution he has made to the profession and we salute his achievements over an incredible thirty years of service.”

Mr McLaughlin has taught all aspects of orthodontic appliance design and construction to undergraduate and postgraduate dental students as well as student dental technicians at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry for more than twenty years, and has almost thirty years of experience in orthodontic technology.

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