A big thank you and even bigger congratulations to Bald-eesh Chana and the British Association of Dental Therapists as they celebrated 50 years of dental therapy at their Annual Scientific Meeting in London recently. I was invited to attend the meeting and was very impressed by the high calibre speakers and in-depth subjects covered (to say nothing of the fabulous food and great company at the dinner!). Keep a look out in further issues for a review of the event.

The Care Quality Commission and the uncertainty surrounding the finer details of registration with CQC is gathering pace as the launch date for dentist registration gets nearer. The CQC has acknowledged this by extending the opening hours of their ‘contact centre’ to help answer queries from suitably confused practices. I must admit to feeling quite pleased that I currently don't have to register with them (but with the way their reach has extended, I am keeping tabs on when the dental press fall under their jurisdiction)!

In true journo-style though, I feel that as we can share queries and challenges in a public format, we can all benefit. So, if you have a question regarding CQC that you don't feel you have had a proper explanation to, email me and I will see what I can do. That way we may all just get over this latest hurdle facing practices!  

Colgate Oral Health Month

Around 9,000 dental practices in the UK are set to take part in this year’s Colgate Oral Health Month.

Participating practices have been issued with a pack containing educational materials and motivational materials to promote the campaign’s messages.

The theme for the 2010 campaign is ‘Discover 5 Essentials for an Even Healthier Mouth’, which are brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and replace your toothbrush regularly; avoid sugary snacks between meals and visit the dentist regularly.

Colgate is organising and running a UK roadshow throughout September as part of the campaign. The company aims to use the road shows to help raise the awareness concerning the importance of good oral hygiene and care standards.

The campaign also contains a CPD programme, which focuses on the theme of delivering prevention in practice based on the principles contained in the Department of Health's toolkit, Delivering Better Oral Health: An Evidence Based Toolkit (2nd edition, July 2009).

The verifiable CPD, Putting Evidence into Practice, is available to all dental professionals, by downloading the interactive programme from www.colgateohm.co.uk.
A dentist in Hull is travel- ing to Morocco to give vital dental treatment to the Berber Tribe.

The tribe of 50,000 has just one doctor and no dentists.

Chris Branfield, from Castle Park Dental Care in Cottingham, has helped to set up the charity to give dental treatment to people in remote parts of the world.

He and seven other dentists will be taking part in the eight-day expedition to treat the Berber Tribe in North East Morocco.

In a Berber village by the Mediterranean Sea, the group of eight dentists will be treating both men and women whose biggest problem is gingivitis (inflammation of the gums surrounding the teeth).

Dr Branfield said: “In ten years’ time, the day will come when the Berber Tribe, its land and its traditions, will be swallowed up into mainstream society - just as the Red Indians and the American West were swallowed up by the white man before the day came to experience their tribe in their natural habitat, is available to a very few.”

Money is being raised by Castle Park Dental Care for supplies and materials to help the Berber Tribe and the cost of the trip is being personally met by Dr Branfield.

If you wish to sponsor the expedition, go to www.castleparkdental.co.uk.

Tenth anniversary of the Premier Symposium

This year, the risk management conference, Premier Symposium, will be celebrating its tenth anniversary.

It is celebrating the event with a compelling line-up of speakers. Organised by Dental Protection, the leading indemnity organisation for dental professionals in the UK and by Schülke, the international name in cross-infection control, this year’s Premier Symposium will take place on Saturday 5 December 2010 at Kings College, London.

A spokeswoman for Dental Protection said: “The opportun

CQC extends opening hours to help dentists prepare

In order to help dentists prepare to apply for registration, the Care Quality Commission is extending its national contact centre’s opening hours.

The new hours are 8.30am to 8pm Monday to Thursday, from 8.30am to 5.30pm on Friday and from 8am to 4pm on Saturdays. In addition, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has also published a new system of registration: Guide for providers of primary care services to help practitioners.

The new guidance provides more information on the application process, which was refined following a series of pilot projects in June/July of this year.

General dental practitioners will be invited to start applying soon, so that all providers are registered by 1 April 2011 and the CQC expects - from the available data - to register more than 8,500 providers. Due to this expected large amount of applications, dentists will be put into groups with each group given an application window within which to apply. Providers (essentially ‘practices’) will be registered against the new essential standards of quality and safety that apply across the care sector; the British Dental Association has produced dental-specific guidance on this.

The CQC’s director, Linda Hutchinson said: “We appreciate that this type of regulation is very new to the dental sector and that people will have a lot of questions. We publish regular updates on our website, but we know that some people would prefer to talk things through over the telephone.”

“We want to make sure our helpline is available to answer questions at times that are convenient to dentists, taking their working hours into consideration. We’re also working closely with the General Dental Council to avoid any overlap in our actions and to minimise any potential regulatory burden for providers.”

Ms Hutchinson added: “Ultimately, our objective is to protect service users and to encourage improvement in the care people receive.”

The Care Quality Commission will be also writing to dentists to advise what will happen next and about what further action needs to be taken.

Smile-on produces learning programme for dental nurses

The dental education provider, Smile-on, has produced an online CD-Rom training programme specifically for dental nurses.

DNNET II is a learning programme produced by Smile-on - available on CD-Rom or online. The comprehensive programme is designed to support designated dental nurses studying towards the National Certificate, the NVQ level three in Oral Health Care Dental Nursing or as an update for established nurses.

As a learning package, DNNET II incorporates dynamic audio and video footage, animations and detailed diagrams that immediately make learning more engaging.

The DNNET II programme covers health and safety, infection control, oral health education, patient assessment, processing radiography, periodontics and restoration, equality and diversity, minor oral surgery, surgical periodontal therapy, orthodontics, communication, prosthodontics and endodontic treatment.

By using DNNET II, dental nurses are given full access to all of the knowledge that they will need to pursue a fulfilling career as well as preparing them for their examination after registration at an accredited assessment centre.

For more information on DNNET II call 020 7400 8989 or email info@smile-on.com.
**Warning issued over solar powered brush**

The British Dental Health Foundation has issued a warning over a new toothbrush that cleans your teeth with solar power.

The Soladey-3 ionic toothbrush from Japan claims to get rid of plaque with electrons that work with saliva to remove it from your teeth.

A solar panel attached to the handle absorbs electrons from light and transmits them to your teeth through ionized water and a titanium oxide semiconductor in the upper shaft of the toothbrush.

You can still use toothpaste but Soladey claims it loosens plaque effectively using only electrons. However the British Dental Health Foundation has expressed its concern over the new invention and is advising people to continue using toothpaste.

Chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, said: “It is absolutely vital that we stick with fluoride toothpaste when brushing our teeth, in order to maintain the good modern day levels of oral health. Good toothpastes, along with a steady brushing action, can remove harmful plaque and bacteria from the mouth, preventing such diseases as caries, gum disease and tooth loss.

“Over the last century, the ingredients in toothpaste have developed to such an extent that it now offers us an exceptional level of protection against oral diseases such as decay and gum disease.”

The addition of fluoride for instance, which became common in toothpaste from the 1970s, helps strengthen enamel and makes the teeth more resistant to tooth decay.

Other important components in toothpastes include antibacterial agents such as Triclosan and zinc, which helps thwart gingivitis. If untreated, it can lead to periodontal disease, the most common cause of tooth loss in adults.

Dr Carter is warning people to be cautious about the new Japanese brush, which is currently in the prototype stage.

The solar-powered brush is the idea of Dr Kunio Komiyama, who is now a professor of dentistry at Canada’s University of Saskatchewan. The brush itself is called the Soladey-3XJ.

Dr Carter said: “The components that make up today’s toothpaste are far too complex, for what essentially is a ‘gadget’, to replicate. I’m certain that more tests need to be undergone to see if the brush can do what it claims and, in addition, to measure any potential long-term effects not using toothpaste may have on an individual.

“As we know of, there is yet no substitute for brushing our teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste – and I cannot see that changing.”

The company responsible for the brush is currently conducting a study to determine how teenagers rate the solar powered toothbrush in comparison with a regular toothbrush.

**Free research event for dental care professionals**

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) will be hosting the second in a series of free research events for dental care professionals.

This free event on 27th November builds on the highly successful introductory event in June 2009, which was aimed to promote research activities among dental care professionals (DCPs).

The Research Day will once again be a collaboration between the FGDP (UK) and the British Society for Dental Hygienists and Therapists, with additional sponsorship from partners in the British Dental Trade.

The programme will focus on the progress made since June 2009 and will include a report of a pilot study into DCP skills usage and plans for a national study of dental hygienists skills usage and job satisfaction.

There will be a series of presentations from DCPs on their achievements in the field of research.

The programme will also include essential information on the opportunities for further progression in research, including presentations on retrospective studies, undertaking a PhD and literature review.

Delegates will have the opportunity to take part in breakout group sessions on producing research abstracts and posters; these will be led by DCPs and dentists who have produced and presented research posters and abstracts. They will also take part in research topic selections and literature searching in small groups.

Ken Eaton, FGDP (UK) national research facilitator and leader of the initiative said: “Although in the past active involvement in research has not been of interest to the vast majority of DCPs, it has been very encouraging to see the enthusiasm of the small minority who have become involved and the results that they have achieved.

“I am particularly pleased by feedback I have received from DCPs that the deeper insights they have obtained from research has changed the way in which they treat their patients.”

The Research Day is open to all DCPs who are involved or interested in developing in the field of research.

There is no fee for the event and certificates for five hours of verifiable CPD will be provided to delegates.

Registration will be at 10am and will finish at 4pm.

For further details and to register for the event please contact the Amrita Narain on 020 7869 6750 or email anarain@rcseng.ac.uk.
“How to grow your dental business in an adverse economic climate”, as presented by Iain Forster, Managing Director of DIO UK, at the Royal Society of Medicine, London

Iain Forster, Managing Director of DIO UK, presented his marketing advice and ideas to delegates at the Royal Society of Medicine on Friday 3rd September. The 45-minute session was well attended and there was much interest shown both in the content of his presentation and the follow-up series of marketing workshops Iain is holding over the next few months to help dentists make the most of their marketing budgets.

In his presentation Iain said that it was a good time to be in dentistry, with the population increasing and costs decreasing. He also put a positive spin on the recession saying that companies that promoted heavily during a recession were often the first to emerge from it and the most successful.

Despite encouraging dentists to promote their services during a recession, Iain urged caution. He said that companies should not over spend and should test marketing methods to determine what worked best for them and focus on those that proved to be most successful. “It pays to start small and build confidence,” he said.

Iain was confident that the economic climate is right for dentists to promote their businesses. He went on to explain that it is however essential that practices remain focussed, targeting those people with whom they already have a relationship before spending too much money looking further afield. He drew a distinction between internal marketing to reach out to the local population, educating their own practice teams and the importance of the Internet; and external marketing that was designed to open up new markets over an extended period. “Internal marketing gives us business next year,” he said. “External marketing gives us business next year.”

In closing Iain introduced the new “21st Century Dental Marketing” workshops which help dentists to take advantage of the opportunities they have available to market their businesses in the modern climate. The workshops cover:

- Maximising patient conversions;
- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO);
- Pay-Per-Click (PPC) campaigns;
- and much more.

To book your place on the next 21st Century Dental Marketing workshop, go to: www.dentalmarketinguk.com

Iain is now presenting his lecture as a free online webinar. Delegates can register for the online seminar by going to www.dentalwebinar.co.uk or visit http://www.dentala.co.uk/seminars/dentistry-marketingwebinar.html.

DIO Implant is a global supplier of dental implant technology. Established for over 20 years, DIO is rapidly expanding in the UK and has already taken a sizeable share of the market with its combination of high quality, sensible pricing and clear communication. The company’s focus on marketing education is part of its strategy to build effective and profitable business partnerships throughout the dental industry.
Closure of NHS Direct will affect dental health most, says charity

The chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, claims it will be people’s oral health that will suffer most as a result of the closure of the medical advice helpline NHS Direct.

The axing of the 24-hour nurse-led service is set to leave the future of 1,400 nurses uncertain, as well as 15,000 callers a day who rely on its professional advice. The government has said it will replace the service with the new NHS 111 service.

However, Dr Carter claimed this is not an adequate alternative and said: “NHS Direct was a quality service and an essential source of information for the public. Sadly, they have replaced it with a facility which will simply struggle to offer the same standard of assistance.”

The new 111 service will employ fewer qualified nurses and will instead turn to non-specialist ‘call advisors’ who have completed a 60-hour training programme.

“Unfortunately, when looking to slash costs, the temptation is to look to cut staff, their wages or to introduce cheaper employees altogether. This seems to be the case with the 111 service.

‘NHS Direct was a quality service and an essential source of information for the public.’

“Time will tell on how it will be received in the long-run by the public and whether the same standard of advice can be replicated by non-professionals.”

He added: “Regrettably, it will be dental health that will suffer the most. The now abandoned NHS Direct service regularly took more calls related to dentistry than any other area and if you consider on top of that the potential cuts to local PCTs, it leaves us asking just who is going to fill the void in terms of giving qualified information to the public?”

He hopes that people will turn to the National Dental Helpline, which is staffed by fully-qualified dental nurses, who offer free advice at a local-rate number.

NHS Direct, which was formed in 1998, was staffed by nurses and health advisers at 55 sites around the United Kingdom and received around five million calls a year to its core services, as well as an additional five million people who used its online health and symptoms checker.

A trial of the new 111 phoneline is currently being tested in the North East region, with further trials to be carried out across the UK over the coming three years.

The online version of the service is set to remain, in addition to the phone service in both Scotland and Wales.