Sainsbury's dentist

The UK’s first supermarket dentist has opened in Sainsbury’s. The dental surgery in the branch of Sainsbury’s in Sale, Greater Manchester, opened earlier this month. It is open every day and check-ups are virtually the same as those of an NHS dentist. Patients can get two for the price of one by nipping into the dentistry after stock-up shopping trolley.

Dental practitioner, Dr Lance Knight, the brainchild behind the surgery’s novel location, plans to create more dental surgeries in supermarkets, if the pilot scheme turns up trumps.

Patients are welcome to just drop in or they can book an appointment in advance.

The dental surgery follows hot on the heels of the first GP surgery, which was opened several months ago at a nearby Sainsbury’s branch.

Free tickets

The BDTA Dental Showcase 2008 takes place from Thursday, October 2 to Saturday, October 4 at, ExCel, London. To reserve your complimentary ticket, log onto www.dentalshowcase.com, telephone the registration hotline on 01494 729959 or text your name, address, occupation and GDC no. to 07786 206 276. Advance registration closes on September 26, with registration on the day at £10 per person.

Reservation Highway is the official booking agency for the event.

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Communication in dentistry: Stories from the practice at BDTA's Showcase, October 2-4, ExCel London.

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DDU advises the expert witnesses

T he Defence Dental Union (DDU), the specialist dental division of the Medical Defence Union (MDU), has issued advice to dentists who write expert reports or give evidence in court to help them avoid common pitfalls. Common allegations against expert witnesses are failure to be impartial, not examining papers or patients properly, giving misleading advice and not declaring conflicts of interest.

The DDU’s tips for dental professionals who act as expert witnesses are to ensure that intelligible instructions are given, to understand legal and civil procedure rules, to keep up-to-date in specialist areas of practice and be aware of ethical codes, to avoid acting as both an expert and factual witness on the same case, to inform the court if it creates a real conflict of interest, not to give opinions on things little known about.

Also, expert dental witnesses should not disclose confidential information, except to those instructed in treating them, without consent.

Rupert Hoppenbrouwers, DDU head, said: ‘While the General Medical Council (GMC) has recently published, Acting as an Expert Witness, which sets out the role and duties of expert practitioners who act as expert witnesses, there is no equivalent for dental professionals. The DDU often instructs experts in a wide range of dental specialties when we are defending our members. They are needed to provide evidence in a variety of legal proceedings, including negligence claims and GDC disciplinary actions, and so we are very aware of the qualifications necessary to do the job. We also assist members with ethical dilemmas, complaints and claims arising from their own expert witness work and know there are quite a few pitfalls awaiting an unsuspecting dental professional. The expert witness is a key player in many dental cases, as the court or tribunal will want to hear the opinion of an experienced, impartial dental professional to assist in making a decision about the case.’

Expert dental witnesses can be confused with the professional dental witness. The expert dental witness is instructed by lawyers to provide the court with an opinion, whereas the professional dental witness is a witness to fact. Recently in the context of past dental treatment. In many trials and hearings, both kinds of dental witness give evidence.

The DDU has published a briefing document – Dental Reports and Court Appearances – for dental professionals asked to act in legal proceedings. DDU members can phone 0800 085 0614 for a copy or advice.

Leeds Dental Institute fights the fear factor

L eeds Dental Institute, ranked the top school in the UK for dentistry is currently looking at better ways to improve dental treatment and take the fear factor out of the patient experience for good.

Professor Jennifer Kirkham, research director of Leeds Dental Institute said the laboratory was looking for safe new ways to control plaque which do not rely on toothpaste.

She said: ‘We see patients in the clinic who are not able to brush effectively because the shape of the mouth may not allow sufficient access, the patient could be disabled or just not a proficient brusher.

‘One of the new treatments makes use of a readily available compound in an innovative way to control plaque formation, using photo dynamic therapy (PDT). The patient uses a mouth wash containing an anti-bacterial agent which is activated by bright light and results in plaque destruction. This is trialled in the clinic and patient feedback helps researchers identify where further modifications are needed.’

‘The principle of working from bench to clinic and back to bench will see a circle of constant improvement in oral health and it is this partnership with patients which ensures research has an impact.’

Another research project could transform the approach to filling teeth forever, Professor Kirkham explains.

‘We have developed a method for Filling without Drilling, which uses a low viscosity tein based fluid which is painted onto the teeth where it infiltrates into the pores. Once inside the pores, the fluid solidifies, to become a gel which then absorbs calcium to rebuild the tooth mineral, bringing about a natural repair, without the pain or discomfort usually associated with a traditional drilling procedure. ’

A £1.5 million investment by the University of Leeds is set to bring the new Dental Clinical and Translational Research Unit to the forefront of global research and development in oral health by linking the laboratory activity directly to the needs of patients treated in the clinic.

The flagship centre for world class dental research and clinical practice, the first of its kind in the UK, opens at the Leeds Dental Institute in January 2009.

A coup for Morris & Co

D ental specialist chartered accountant firm, Morris & Co, has strengthened its capability further by recruiting Bob Cummings - one of the country’s foremost experts on tax matters, such as incor- poration and national press. Mr Cummings is also National Tax Advisor to the National Association of Specialist Dental Accountants. (NADA)

Nick Ledingham, the Morris & Co partner responsible for dental clients, who is also chairman of NADA, commented: ‘We are all delighted to have Bob as part of the team. He is liked and respected by his clients and we know he will help to strengthen further Morris & Co’s standing in the dental world.’

Steve Gates: ‘What is the fastest way to treat patients?’

Any dentist deciding to stop treating children under the NHS will be concerned about the response from families registered with the practice, but those who have introduced Plans for Children report a positive response from most families, most of whom simply want to continue bringing their children to the family dentist.

Bristol-based Dr Peter Redfern, who instigated children’s dental plans in his surgery, said: ‘We have been offering children’s plans for over two years now, since our PCT confirmed that it was unlikely to offer child-only contracts. In the run up to the end of our old NHS contract we spoke to parents about our decision, explaining that lack of time to provide quality care and the number crunching approach was at odds with our professional training. It was very successful with most parents accepting the change and signing up.

Many practices set the fees for their children’s plan to cover check-ups, x-rays and scale and polish twice a year, and then charge any restorative treatment at a discounted private rate.

For more information about dental plans for children, call 0800 328 5225.

Another option is Denplan’s Excel for Children – a quality programme developed with parents, but those who have introduced Plans for Children report a positive response from most families, most of whom simply want to continue bringing their children to the family dentist.

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