Mixed views for Scotland’s Action Plan

The Scottish Dental Action Plan has received a mixed verdict from dental practitioners across Scotland, since its launch three years ago. A survey by the British Dental Association (BDA) found that only 57 per cent - a third of high street dentists in Scotland - believe that the Action Plan has changed dentistry for the better, since it was introduced by the then Scottish Executive in April 2005.

Although nearly a fifth of dental practitioners (17 per cent) are of the opinion that the dental action plan has actually made things worse, just under half of those surveyed (46 per cent) said they did not think the scheme had made either a positive or negative impact.

Andrew Lamb, BDA director for Scotland, said: ‘The results of this survey highlight ongoing concerns about the future of dentistry in Scotland. It is clear that the Scottish Government still has a number of issues to address if access to NHS dentistry for patients across Scotland is to be improved. It is only through constructive dialogue between the profession and the Scottish Government that these matters can be addressed. The Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson, has demonstrated a willingness to discuss these issues with representatives of the BDA’s Scottish dental practice committee. This must continue.’

The survey also investigated other issues facing dentistry in Scotland. For example, despite dentists investing heavily in private facilities in recent years, 24 per cent of respondents said their practices were not allowed to comply with the decontamination guidelines currently being consulted on by the Scottish Government, which raises the spectre of possible forced practice closures. The potential impact of practitioners retiring, with regard to the accessibility of patients to NHS care, was also highlighted by the survey. It revealed that practitioners aged 50 and over has larger NHS patient lists than their younger colleagues.

Professor Panos Pappapanou from Columbia University pointed to the increasing evidence for the link between Periodontitis and Macrovascular disease, while Professor Thomas Van Dyke highlighted how inflammation is common to both Periodontitis and Vascular disease, pointing to mechanistic links between the conditions.

Finally, a panel discussion stressed the need for cooperation between dentists and doctors and the need for all research undertaken to be multi-disciplinary.

CODE backs guidance review

New managers for IDH

Mark Caulfield talked about Athromatous vascular disease and ischaemic stroke as some of the major killers of our age.

Chris Barrow and Matt Jackson join the management team

Dr Mendlesohn and the chairperson of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons at Glasgow, who spoke about the mouth as a window on the body.

International Dental Holdings (IDH) has appointed two new members to its management team. The company has recruited Chris Barrow as director of private sector development from October 1. Mr Barrow has more than 12 years experience of implementing high quality and innovative systems and standards in NHS practice.

Matt Jackson has also been recruited to the new role of director of private and specialist operations. His role is to design and implement working practices to enhance IDH’s customer service, marketing and profitability in the private and specialist division.

The division’s aim is to create a new business model for acquiring dental practices in a way which allows the principal dentist to retain a share of the capital value and continue to benefit financially from the development of their business.

practice owners can therefore effectively hand over the daily responsibility of running their business while aiming to create long-term financial growth and above that which would be achieved as an independent outfit.

IDH is setting in place a range of business solutions to private practices which include financial modelling, marketing, sales and operational systems.

The IDH teams including Mr Barrow and Mr Jackson will be attending the 2008 Dental Showcase in October in London where they will be unveiling the new division.

Integrated Dental Holdings (IDH) is a leading UK dental practice owner, with over 140 practices providing both NHS and private dental care.

The BDA’s general dental council (GDC) in 2008 to review its guidance on non-surgical cosmetic procedures has been welcomed by dentists and the dental management association, CODE.

The organisation, which runs the membership services for the Association for Facial Aesthetics (AFA) represents business owners in the dental and cosmetic fields and is committed to developing and maintaining high standards.

Paul Mendlesohn, chief executive of CODE, wrote to the GDC calling for a constructive dialogue, after the council ruled that ‘non-surgical cosmetic procedures should not be considered as legitimate additions to dentistry and they must be advertised separately to a dentist’s practice of dentistry’.

Mr Mendlesohn commented: ‘We appreciate that the GDC was trying to clarify the situation on non-surgical cosmetic procedures. However, the impact of its statement was just to add to the confusion. So we are absolutely delighted that the GDC is going to have a rethink about dentists advertising cosmetic procedures. Dr Mendlesohn continued: ‘It is the AFA’s view that it is far safer for a member of the public to receive non-surgical skin treatments from a qualified doctor, dentist or nurse. In the light of that, if qualified professionals cannot advertise their status clearly, the public will find it extremely difficult to know which practitioner has the most appropriate skills. This must include skills in surgery and infection control, as well as knowing how to deal with medical emergencies, in order to provide the safest and most effective and appropriate treatment.

The GDC decided at its September meeting that it would review the statement it had previously released, banning the advertising of cosmetic procedures by dentists.

CODE believes advertisement for facial treatments should state that the provider is a dentist. This would be in the public health interest because the public could then discriminate between medically qualified and non-medically qualified providers.

It also thinks the GDC’s previous guidelines on facial treatments could be unworkable. For example, it is unclear whether dentists would be allowed to use facial advertising for aesthetic treatment immediately alongside adverts for dentistry or if they could place separate ads in the same publication.

Dr Mendlesohn is campaigning for dentists to advertise cosmetic procedures alongside dentistry.
When we opened our new practice, cashflow was a key priority for us. We operate a “just in time” ordering system so that we don’t have too much money tied up in stock and Henry Schein Minerva’s stock audit makes this much easier. We regularly order on-line and because we know we can rely on Henry Schein Minerva’s excellent service and delivery, we can maximise our cashflow and credit terms.”

Alex & Abby – Michael Dental Care, Cheltenham