Mixed views for Scotland's Action Plan

The Scottish Dental Action Plan has received a mixed - and often conflict 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 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 practice 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.

Conference confirms periodontal and systemic disease link

A prestigious panel addressed an audience of dentists, doctors and scientists at a day-long conference on: the impact of oral disease on systemic health: what is the evidence and how big is the problem?

The event at the QE11 Conference Centre in London on Tuesday, September 9, was organised by the Oral and Dental Research Trust (ODRT). Its chairman, Professor Naim Wilson introduced the event, which was sponsored by Colgate. In his introduction he said: 'A strategic review of oral and dental research in the UK was published by the British Society for Dental Research. From this arose a need to inform the public about the importance of oral health in relation to dental health. The ODRT wants to develop pilot research projects that further raises awareness that systemic diseases present themselves in the oral cavities.'

Prof Nairn said oral diseases were among the most common to affect human beings. It was no coincidence that Chinese Medicine could assess the condition of the body by just looking at the colour and texture of the tongue.

Professor Iain Chapple, from Birmingham University Dental School, was chairman for the day and introduced the first speaker, Professor Michael Lewis, from Cardiff University and vice-president of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons at Glasgow, who spoke about the mouth as a window on the body.

He was followed by Professor Rhys Williams, from Swansea Medical School, who reported on the increasing numbers of people of all ages around the world who are contracting Diabetes Mellitus. Dr Philip Preshaw, from the School of Dental Surgery in Newcastle, drew out the causal link between Periodontitis and Diabetes, while Dr Christine Ritchie from the University of Alabama in Birmingham USA, explained the scientific back-up for the mechanistic links between the two conditions.

Three more distinguished speakers followed: Professor Mark Caufield talked about Atheromatous vascular disease and ischaemic stroke as some of the major killers of our age.

New managers for IDH

Matt Jackson has also been recruited to the new role of director of private and specialist commissioning. 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 over 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 where they will be unveiling the new division.

CODE backs guidance review

Dr Mendesoehn is campaigning for dentists to advertise cosmetic procedures alongside dentistry.

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

It also thinks the GDC's previous guidelines can be unworkable. For example, it is unclear whether dentists would be allowed to advertise for aesthetic treatment immediately alongside adverts for dentistry or if they could place separate adverts in the same publication.

Mendesoehn and the chair-
Me & Henry Schein

“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

Partnership in Practice

To develop your partnership
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