Gales gets its first state of the art dental training unit

A new state of the art dental teaching unit has been officially opened in Wales.

First Minister Rhodri Morgan officially unveiled the Dental Teaching Unit in Porth, the first of its kind to open in Wales.

Patients will be able to benefit from some of the best technology available in dentistry with treatment provided by foundation dentists based at the multi-purpose unit.

The Dental Teaching Unit, which has been funded as a joint initiative by the Welsh Assembly Government, Rhondda Cynon Taff Teaching Local Health Board and the School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education at Cardiff University.

It will be home to 10 recently qualified dentists while they complete a two-year longitudinal Dental Foundation Training Scheme.

A Central Decontamination Unit has been installed in the building to improve infection control, while cutting edge technology has been imported from America and used to fully equip eight dental surgeries.

The newly qualified dentists will work under the guidance of experienced dental surgeons and will benefit from versatile working stations, which allows the dentist to work amicably with their equipment.

Electronic charting and digital imaging systems will also save valuable time for both dentists and patients, enabling more patients to receive comprehensive care in all aspects of NHS dentistry.

The Dental Teaching Unit also features an air-conditioned conference centre with 120 seating capacity.

A large screen linked to video-cameras located in one of the surgeries will allow members of the dental team to watch live procedures.

After viewing the procedures they can enhance and develop their own skills in a specialised dental training room fully equipped with 18 individual work stations.

First Minister Rhodri Morgan said: “This Dental Training Unit will be the first of its kind in Wales and it will make a significant difference to the quality of our dentistry.

Not only will it provide invaluable training for our future and current dentists it will improve access to dentistry in the area, so that every patient will have access to a dentist.

This is a real red letter day for dental patients and trainee dentists in Wales.”

The surgery is also equipped with a surgical operating microscope.

Jeremy Hayes, senior dental surgeon, will use the microscope to provide specialist endodontic treatment for patients of the Dental Teaching Unit along with referrals from local practitioners under the terms of the NHS Dental Services.

The Dental Postgraduate Section within the School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education has been instrumental in bringing these ambitious plans for dentistry in Wales to fruition.

Alan Griffiths, dental programme director, said: “This Dental Teaching Unit will provide our newly graduated dentists with an invaluable opportunity to begin their careers in dentistry. This is the start of a promising career pathway in an environment where they can gain practical experience and benefit from high-tech operating and learning tools.”

The newly opened training unit is to be named the Dental Teaching Unit at Cardiff University.

More and more adults opt for braces

More and more adults are choosing braces to fix their wonky teeth, according to prosthodontist, Dr Farid Monshi.

The growing popularity of smile beauty procedures has seen cosmetic dentistry sales rise by 76 per cent between 2006 and 2008.

Despite the economic downturn, the industry continues to grow and Britions now spend around £550m a year on treatments with many parents seeking treatment at the same time as their children.

The number of Britons who opted for braces to fix their crooked teeth was up by 545 per cent to 1,164 in 2007, according to the latest research figures.

Dr Monshi, principal specialist at Central London dental practice in Harley Street said he had seen an increase in adults looking brace fittings in the run up to Christmas.

He said: “Husbands are buying their wives braces for Christmas and vice versa. We have even had one teenager arrange for her mother to be fitted with them as a Christmas present. I think people are increasingly recognising the gift of a perfect smile. Our teeth are central to the way we feel about ourselves – they determine how much we smile and how others see us.”

He added: “Parents are seeing the benefits braces are bringing their children, and are asking themselves why they aren’t doing it as well. A beautiful smile is good for everyone’s self confidence, young or old.”

Research from the industry’s governing body, the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, found that a third of the population were concerned by the look of their teeth whilst only one in five would always smile in photographs.

Over a quarter of the population believe that cosmetic dentistry could improve their quality of life.
Editorial comment
A professional image

There seems to have been a recent spate of dental professionals behaving badly. From dealing Class A drugs (see news pg8) to coping a feel of pretty patients or dubious nurses (pg4), it seems to be the season for these stories to be getting the public’s attention.

Whilst we may have a secret desire to read about a fellow professional colleagues’ misdeeds, there is a concern that these types of stories, especially when they all seem to arrive at once, can damage the image and integrity of the profession. I would really like to know Dental Tribune readers’ opinion on this - do you think that cases such as those recently seen in the news harm the reputation of the dental profession in the eyes of patients, or does the old adage of “today’s news, tomorrow’s fish wrap” apply? Email me (lisa@dentaltribuneuk.com) and give me your views.

On an unrelated note – whilst walking to work today I glanced, as I do, at a certain well known corporate chain dental practice situated in the grounds of an 18th Century ruined church. Musing on the fact that the ground is reputedly haunted, I wondered if the team there had had any strange experiences. This led me to wondering if there were practices around the country who had residents who simply refused to leave, even in death? As a fan of all things paranormal I would love to hear your tales of ghostly patients, strange noises or anything which would make the hair stand up on the back of your neck!

The best ones will have a chance to be printed in the October 26–November 1st issue of Dental Tribune

Adequate indemnity

A growing number of dental professionals are forming corporate chains dental practice to bid for contracts from PCTs and other bodies and the Dental Defence Union is urging them to ensure their company has adequate indemnity in place.

Dental professionals’ individual indemnity will not cover their company if they are sued because of a failure in company procedure or the actions of a staff member for whom the company has vicarious liability.

For example, if there is inadequate provision of infection control facilities by a dental corporate which leads to a patient acquiring a blood borne infection.

Consequently, the Medical Defence Union, the Dental Defence Union’s (DDU) parent organisation, has introduced an insurance policy for companies which dovetails with the policy that individual members receive to ensure all their clinical negligence claims are covered.

Rupert Hoppenbrouwers, head of the DDU, said: “While an individual dental professional may be sued for a delay in diagnosing an oral cancer, the company could also be sued if, for example, errors in the company’s system for following up referral letters were found to have contributed to the delay.”

For more information on the MDU’s corporate indemnity solution visit www.the-mdu.com/corporate, email corporate@the-mdu.com or telephone 0800 716 576.

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Gum disease linked to mouth cancer

Mouth cancer campaigners are urging people to get checked out by their dentist for gum disease - after researchers linked periodontitis with mouth cancer.

Research published in the American Association for Cancer Research journal ‘Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention’ revealed that chronic gum disease may present a high risk for mouth cancer.

Chronic gum disease, or periodontitis – caused by a build-up of plaque in the mouth and characterised by long-standing inflammation of the gums and eventual tooth loss – was linked to mouth cancers in both smokers and non-smokers.

The news could provide a clue to the rise in mouth cancers where none of the traditional risk factors - tobacco, excessive alcohol and the human papillomavirus (HPV) - were present.

The British Dental Health Foundation’s (BDHF) chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said: ‘This fascinating study underlines the importance of a good dental routine.

Preventing gum disease is as simple as brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between the teeth with an interdental brush or floss.

Dental visits are absolutely vital. Check-ups look for potential problems, screen for mouth cancer and professionally clean to help control gum disease. As our campaign tagline goes – ‘if in doubt, get checked out.’

Gum disease linked to mouth cancer

Dentist struck off after sexual ‘thongdoing’

A married dentist took off his trousers and paraded in front of a dental nurse in a leopard-print thong, a tribunal at the General Dental Council heard.

Dr Anthony Barton, who worked at the Red Rose Dental Group in Wigan in Greater Manchester, told the nurse to ‘get a load of that’.

The 56-year-old had an affair with the dental nurse between 2002 and 2007.

Dr Barton is was found guilty of ‘inappropriate, unprofessional and indecent behaviour towards four dental nurses, the council said.

Another young dental nurse claimed Dr Barton would pull at her knickers as she bent over and try to undo her ‘vulgar’ details about his sex life and ask her about hers.

On one occasion when she said she had a sprained thigh, he made her sit down, spread her legs, put one thigh up on a table and began massaging her.

She said: ‘I was highly embarrassed, it was high enough up my leg to be very uncomfortable. I didn’t say much, I just tried to pull my leg away.

Another nurse claimed Dr Barton pulled at her knickers as she bent over and tried to undo her bra through her tunic.

Lydia Barnfather, for the GDC, said: ‘These allegations concern some inappropriate, unprofessional and indecent behaviour towards four dental nurses and over the period from 2000 to 2008.’

The conduct towards these dental nurses, the council said, shows a pattern of behaviour sexually motivated to transgress both the verbal and physical boundaries and standards to be expected of an individual in his professional position.

Dr Barton faces being struck off.

Supermarket applies to open dental surgery

Sainsbury’s supermarket in Bolton has applied for planning permission to open a dental surgery in the store.

The Sainsbury’s dental surgery in Trinity Street in Bolton would be private.

The company has so far successfully set up dental surgeries in stores which have been enormously popular with customers wanting access to health care professionals at convenient locations and at flexible times.

If the application is given the go-ahead, the surgery will be open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm on Saturdays and 12pm to 4pm on Sundays and bank holidays.

‘Groping’ dentist faces retrial

A dentist accused of groping three female patients faces a retrial, after the jury hearing the case against him were discharged.

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The court heard that he touched one of the women’s breasts. Another woman claimed he stood behind her and touched her jaw on both sides before sliding his hands under her arms and down her top.

Both women came forward and accused Dr Heath after an alleged incident involving a third patient emerged. The third patient claimed he removed both of her breasts from her bra and invited her to compare them to see if there was anything wrong.

When he was later arrested Dr Heath of Roseberry Avenue, Lincoln, told police he had treated all three women ‘in an inappropriate, clinical way’.