Call me Dr, Dentist Dr

British Dental Association survey results show overwhelming clinician support for use of the courtesy title Dr

Four-fifths of dentists think it is appropriate to continue to use the courtesy title of ‘Dr’ according to a poll carried out by the British Dental Association (BDA). The survey, which was carried out as part of a discussion hosted on the organisation’s online communities section of the BDA website between late July and early September, attracted high levels of interest, being viewed more than 2,800 times.

The results of the poll will be used to emphasise the profession’s concerns in the BDA’s formal response to the General Dental Council’s consultation on the issue.

“This issue has generated unprecedented levels of interest from contributors to the BDA’s online communities. Participants have sent a very strong signal about their wish to continue using the title Dr. We have listened to them and will convey the strength of that feeling to the GDC in our response to its consultation on this issue,” Dr Susie Sanderson, Chair of the BDA’s Executive Board, said.

“It is clear from the contributions to this forum that, as long as it is made clear that the individual in question is a dentist, patients do not seem to be confused by the use of the title.’

A spokesman for the Department of Health said: “The title of “Doctor” is not a protected title, so you don’t have to be a medical practitioner to use it.”

He added, however, that there was a provision in the Dentists Act 1984, which prevented dentists from using any title or description to suggest a qualification that they did not hold; however, he said that it was up to the General Dental Council to enforce that rule.

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Low weight with milk

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition has found that milk drinkers lose more weight than people who do not drink milk. Regardless of an individual’s diet, the study showed that people who had the highest intake of calcium from dairy products had a greater chance at losing weight. However, milk is not just beneficial for those who wish to lose weight. Dental health experts have emphasised for many years that milk is good for healthy teeth. Its high fluoride content has been shown to protect against tooth decay.

“Milk is a great source of calcium,” said Dr. Laura L. Foster, Director of Science and Nutrition at the American Dental Association. “And it’s a good way to get your daily dose of calcium, which is crucial for maintaining strong bones.”

AIDA ignores EPA’s mercury warning

Today, environmental groups applauded EPA’s announcement to propose a new rule restricting dentists to reduce mercury pollution. “Dentists are the largest polluters of mercury to wastewater,” said Michael Binder, director of the Mercury Project Policy and a steering committee member of the National Mercury Products Campaign. Twelve states have mandated best management practices and amalgam separators at dental clinics, which can eliminate 95 percent of mercury pollution in wastewater. The EPA’s website states that: “When amalgam enters the water, microorganisms can change it into methylmercury, a highly toxic form that builds up in fish. Methylmercury is a well-documented neurotoxin, which can cause adverse effects on the developing brain.” Unfortunately, the American Dental Association continues to ignore the latest science on mercury from EPA’s website, as they say that: “Dental amalgam has little effect on the environment...[and] this amount is not in the form [of mercury] found in fish, which is the greatest concern.”

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