**Mouth cancer ignorance continues**

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The telephone survey conducted by The Facial Surgery Research Foundation, (FSBF) Saving Faces, looked at responses from 444 dental practices in London. Lack of knowledge on oral cancer was revealed to be the case, even when a patient rang a surgery with clear symptoms. The survey showed that in 45 per cent of cases, patients with suspicious symptoms were not offered an appointment within one week. In eight per cent of cases, patients were told they had to wait between three weeks and four months. In a further seven per cent, patients were told they could not be seen at all, because the surgery had met its NHS quota.

The survey revealed that the majority of calls were taken by receptionists who did not recognise a lesion from 444 dental practices in London, and 600 patients nationwide and aims to answer important questions about the treatment of patients with oral cancer to benefit both patients and the NHS.

Dr Nigel Carter, CEO of the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) which is spearheading the awareness campaign, Mouth Cancer Action Week later this year, said: ‘We are very disappointed with the survey results. Mouth cancer kills one person every five hours in the UK and it is vital the entire practice team plus pharmacists can recognise symptoms so patients can be screened quickly, because early detection of mouth cancer raises survival chances to more than 50 per cent.

The BDHF urges dental practices to take action by training team members, support staff and receptionists to spot warning signs, screening patients for mouth cancer at every visit and discussing the issues and warning signs with patients.'