News in Brief

No change, no work
People who refuse to look after their teeth by failing to brush properly or limit sugary drinks should be refused expensive dental treatment on the NHS, a government adviser has suggested. Prof Jimmy Steele, Head of School and Professor of Oral Health Services Research at the University of Leeds, said providing expensive treatments when patients will not improve their own dental hygiene are a "waste of personal and public money." Crowns and root canal work should not be offered to patients who persist with bad habits after they have been warned their dental health is suffering. However, proposals to extend this to all "self-inflicted" diseases and injuries have not gained universal support and Prof Steele is working on a review of the dentistry contract.

Fluoride could cause emergency dentistry
A new study has suggested that infants who are given fluoridated water could be at increased risk of suffering emergency dentistry in the future. The research, carried out by Dr Stephen Levy and published in the Journal of the American Dental Association, showed that babies who were fed formula milk had a much greater chance of suffering from dental problems compared to infants who were fed only on cow's milk or breast milk.

Disposable dental drill hits the market
According to reports, US-based manufacturing company Azenic, has started selling its disposable, high-speed, plastic dental drill after landing $961,000 in new investment. According to their reports, the disposable dental drill will "give dentists the option of a single-patient-use disposable high-speed handpiece with optimum performance."

CQC Forum
GDPUK has launched a further new forum for dentists to discuss issues related to the CQC registration and on-going process, on the website http://www.gdpuk.com. The forum has been made possible by the sponsorship of Apolline Ltd, a company specialising in aiding dental practices with CQC registration and on-going compliance. The lead moderator of the new forum is Keith Hayes, well known on GDPUK, who is Clinical Director of Apolline Ltd. Their website is at http://www.apolline.uk.com/.

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Action on mouth cancer
Lordly launch of annual oral cancer campaign encourages practitioners and patients ‘if in doubt, get checked out’

Following the success of last year’s campaign, Mouth Cancer Action Month officially began 1st November at the Houses of Parliament. Organised by the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) in association with partners such as Denplan and Smile-on, the event was a great success, with many areas of the profession and trade present to help generate awareness of the disease.

Dr Nigel Carter, Chief Executive of the BDHF, opened the event. He stressed the importance of early detection and warning signs. Dr Carter spoke largely of the success of last year’s campaign and his hopes for this year’s Action Month.

Following him, BDHF president Daniel Davis welcomed the assembled guests and gave context as to why the campaign is so important, with one person every five hours dying in the UK from the condition. Subject matter experts were led by Prof Crispian Scully and the initiative was spearheaded by Prof Stephen Lambert-Humble. Other speakers at the event included Denplan’s Henry Glover and Smile-on’s Noam Tamir. Noam officially launched a new educational resource, Oral Cancer: Prevention, Examination, Referral, which has been developed by Smile-on in conjunction with KSS Deanery, BDHF and Dental Protection as well as Deputy CDO Sue Gregory.

Noam said: “If we save the life of only two people per year in the UK we would feel that all this effort was worth our while. I do believe that we can save the lives of thousands of people!”

Finally, Dr David Conway took centre stage to conclude the formal part of the event with the results of some significant research carried out by Glasgow University. The research findings were very sobering and struck a chord with everyone in the room. Covering the study of class, gender, diet and education, Dr Conway covered a range of mouth cancer risk factors and his ending quote from George Orwell’s The Road to Wigan Pier on inequality encapsulated his research.

The reason behind the campaign is a simple one: early detection saves lives. It is hoped that throughout the month dentists and dental practices across the country will provide free screenings for patients and teach their staff to recognise the warning signs. Dentists play a vital role in detecting mouth cancer in patients, and although the thought of referring a patient who has a consistent ulcer or red patches to hospital may spark fear, it’s better to be safe than sorry.

“Mouth cancer is easier to treat if caught early on, and survival rates also improve massively with early detection. Health professionals can play a key part in this, by educating their patients and performing regular oral examinations.” Dr Nigel Carter said.

The call to action reflects the importance of early detection. 9 in 10 people survive mouth cancers caught early on, however, the five year survival rate remains as low as 50 per cent.

The campaign will focus on raising awareness of mouth cancer among the public, and will point out the significance of self-examination. Educating people on the early warning signs of the disease, the common risk factors, self-examination, and the importance of regular screenings, will save lives.

You and your practice can take part in Mouth Cancer Action Month: with the Blue Ribbon Badge Appeal, posters, fundraising, and press releases throughout the month, raising awareness couldn’t be easier. See the full story on pages 10 – 11 for more information.

Dr Nigel Carter of the BDHF