If in doubt, get checked out

Dental Tribune’s Laura Hatton sets the scene for Mouth Cancer Action Month in November

As the front page shows, this November Mouth Cancer Action Month officially began at the Houses of Parliament and was hosted by the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF). Along with the Mouth Cancer Foundation, the campaign will be raising awareness of mouth cancer. The BDHF will be promoting the campaign and tagline ‘If in doubt, get checked out’ to raise awareness of the disease.

Currently in the UK, mouth cancer kills one person every five hours, and less than half of those diagnosed with the disease survive beyond five years of diagnosis.

Recent studies have shown that drinking, smoking, and unhealthy diets have doubled mouth, throat and food pipe cancer cases in young people. Furthermore, links between oral sex and mouth cancer have recently been discovered.

These worrying figures show that action needs to be taken.

So far the Mouth Cancer Foundation has organised its annual sponsored Mouth Cancer 10KM Awareness Walk and throughout November wristbands, t-shirts and posters will be available to help promote Action Month, all of which sport the blue logo.

Denplan are also taking part in Mouth Cancer Action Month and in a bid to ensure that the campaign receives maximum exposure they are distributing approximately 50,000 MCAM posters to dentists, doctors, hospitals, PCTs and many other health professionals across the UK. Encouraging people to visit their dentist or GP to check any areas of concern in the mouth, the posters highlight the key symptoms of the disease and risk factors associated with mouth cancer.

“Many people have not heard of mouth cancer, and do not realise how common it is – latest figures show that over 5,300 cases are diagnosed in the UK in a year”

Awareness

Stepping into reality, the high profile case of Michael Douglas has recently brought oral cancer out of the shadows and into the news and health experts are hoping that the public will start opening their eyes to the existence of mouth cancer – too many people are simply convinced it could never happen to them.

“For the majority of mouth cancer sufferers ignore the first symptoms of the disease and fail to seek out advice of a healthcare professional.”

Another worrying fact that came out of the study was that 40 per cent of the people who took part in the study decided to self-manage their symptoms.

Dr Carter said: “Public awareness of oral cancer and the associated risk factors appears to be too low here in the UK. An awareness of the risk factors and symptom recognition by the public is a critical issue in determining survival rates, as early detection greatly improves the chances of survival.

To boost this information that early diagnosis saves lives, the BDHF is encouraging people to take part in the Blue Ribbon Badge Appeal to raise both funds and awareness of mouth cancer.

How your practice can help

Throughout Action Month dentists can play a vital role in saving lives by providing routine screenings for mouth cancer and to educate themselves on the symptoms of mouth cancer so they can inform their patients and help save lives. Denplan has provided a template which practices can send to the press so they can advertise that they are offering free screenings. The template is available at www.denplan.co.uk

Dentists can also take part in the Blue Ribbon Badge Appeal to circulate awareness. Once they have registered they will be posted a kit which includes:

- One collection box
- 25 X enamel blue ribbon lapel pins

To order the Blue Ribbon Badge Appeal kit and more information on getting involved please contact us on 0800 281 020

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An official Mouth Cancer Awareness badge is being given away to help raise awareness and funds for the Mouth Cancer Foundation. The badges can either be sold to raise money or they can be given away to increase screening. In response to these messages, either way, the badges given away to help raise awareness and promote the BMHFs tagline.

The Mouth Cancer Foundation have been calling for an understanding of the human element of cancer and the reality of the disease, which is far from an understandable statistic. In order to raise awareness, the Mouth Cancer Foundation are appealing to the public and promoting the Blue Ribbon Badge Appeal, the public and those who chew tobacco are most at risk.

One video retells the story of Michael Douglas, a triumph in clarity, this story aims to raise awareness of oral cancer and to most importantly increase screening.

A reason to smile during Mouth Cancer Action Month, a ten awareness campaign. The programme, ‘Oral Cancer – Prevention, Examination. Referral’, aims to raise awareness of oral cancer learning resource and aims to offer an extensive education and awareness.

www.mouthcancer.org

Speak to your dentist, doctor or pharmacist

If In doubt, get checked out

one death every five hours in the UK

that don't patch white

Look for:

mouth ulcers
red patches of soreness

every five hours in the UK

November 8-14, 2010

*Source: CRUK.

The Mouth Cancer Awareness Month poster will be put up in dental practices across the UK. Alongside the many fundraising events and along with the Blue Ribbon Badge Appeal, the public and those who chew tobacco are most at risk.

Early detection does save lives.

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