GDC to review its Standards and Scope of Practice

The General Dental Council (GDC) has begun a review of its ‘Standards Guidance’ and ‘Scope of Practice’. It has been five years since the GDC published its ‘Standards Guidance’ and replaced its previous guidance document, ‘Maintaining Standards’. The move to ethical principles was a significant change in direction at the time, however, in the last five years the landscape of the regulatory world, and the GDC itself, has changed.

The GDC now registers the entire dental team – dentists, dental nurses, orthodontic therapists, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental technicians and clinical dental technicians – and has more than 52,000 dental professionals on its registers.

The aim of the Standards Review is to go back to square one. The GDC will be asking registrants, patients and other stakeholders what level of detail they would find helpful, what they think of the current standards, what works, what doesn’t and what’s missing. The review will take place throughout 2011 and will include consultations, focus groups, a working group and GDC staff attending events across the UK to hear directly from those affected.

Anyone who wishes to make any comments directly to the GDC on the current guidance can do so here (standards@gdc-uk.org).

The GDC is hoping to produce the new guidance in early 2012.

Running alongside Standards, the ‘Scope of Practice’ review will evaluate the effectiveness of the current document, which outlines the role of each member of the dental team; it also summarises what additional skills they might go on to learn.

A call for feedback on ‘Scope of Practice’ will be launched at the end of January 2011 and will be available on the GDC website www.gdc-uk.org. The forum will ask registrants to give their views on the document, stating whether they think the dental team work together more effectively; they can also lead feedback on what skills may need to be added or amended for each of the seven registrant groups.

Dental technician David Smith, Chair of the Standards Committee, said: “The reviews of both of these documents could result in a radical redesign of the GDC’s guidance for registrants and it’s therefore extremely important that we hear from everyone who’ll be affected and make the right changes. The standards are the main ethical guide that we expect dental professionals to apply to their everyday work. This is a significant piece of work for the GDC and one that we anticipate will have a positive impact on dental professionals and therefore on patients.”

Oral health study wins SGH funding

A grant of more than £500,000 has been awarded to a study to will investigate the effect of social deprivation on oral health in outer north-east London. The project, which beat off competition from eleven other proposals to secure funding from the Shirley Glasshouse Hughes Trust Fund, will investigate whether people living in deprived communities define oral health differently from their peers living in less deprived areas. It will also assess whether individuals’ concepts of oral health affect the way that they care for themselves and what barriers exist to individuals accessing care and adopting healthy behaviours.

The study will consider the populations of Redbridge, Waltham Forest and Barking and Dagenham, and use patient concepts of oral health to ask whether deprivation can explain why some individuals engage in behaviours such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and irregular visits to a dentist, which increase their risk of oral diseases.

It will assess the strengths and shortcomings of the way oral health services are provided, providing evidence on how to adapt existing structures and develop new services and interventions that overcome barriers to care. It will also provide evidence to underpin models of commissioning care.

Professor Liz Kay, Chair of the Trustees of the Fund, said: “Despite an overall improvement in the oral health of the UK over the past four decades, a persistent and unacceptable chasm between those with the best and worst oral health persists. Understanding why we have this gap is crucial to addressing this situation. The trustees hope that this piece of work can make a significant contribution to expanding that understanding and helping to develop practical tools to address it.”

The project will be led by Dr Russ Ladwa (pictured), Dean of the Faculty of General Dental Practice at the Royal College of Surgeons of England in London. It will be hosted by the Institute of Dentistry at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry.

Thanking the trustees, Dr Ladwa said: “The award of this grant represents a great boost to research in primary care. The FGDP(UK) will work in collaboration with the host institution, Barts and The London SMD, Queen Mary University of London, which has a tradition of research in health inequalities. Both the Institutions are delighted to be given the opportunity to carry out research that will provide evidence to develop cost effective models of delivering prevention and treatment in primary dental care.”

EAO announces the winners of its 2010 Research Competitions

The winners of two coveted research prizes, awarded annually by the European Association for Osseointegration (EAO), have been announced.

The EAO Clinical Research Prize for 2010 has been awarded to Maurizio Tonetti from Italy and the EAO Basic Research Prize to Pascale Habre-Hallage from Lebanon and Ulricke Kuchler from Austria.

All three winners were awarded their prizes at the 19th Annual Scientific Congress of the EAO which took place in Glasgow from 6-9 October 2010.

Each winner received a Diploma from the EAO and a prize of 2,000. The 18 finalists had earlier been selected from nearly 500 abstracts submitted to the EAO Congress.

Maurizio Tonetti and his team won the EAO Clinical Research Prize for their study: ‘Immediate vs delayed implant placement in anteriors: The TIMING trial’. The multi-centre study, which compared the benefits and disadvantages of immediate and delayed implant placement, was won the EAO Clinical Research Prize to.

Pascale Habre-Hallage won her prize for a study entitled “MRM shows cortical activation following mechanical stimulation of oral implants”; and Ulricke Kuchler for a study entitled “Intermittent PTH fails to stimulate osseointegration in diabetic rats”.

Health minister Lord Howe has visited Lancashire to launch a new scheme aimed at improving the oral health of young children.

Teaming up with local primary care trusts, Lancashire County Council aims to tackle the county’s poor record on tooth decay.

Dental experts will visit pre-schools providing advice to youngsters and their carers on brushing teeth, making regular trips to the dentist and eating more healthily.

Lord Howe said that the Smile4Life scheme should help the NHS to achieve its goal of improving children’s oral health.

“Too much decay in children is a serious problem,” he revealed. “It can cause a great deal of pain and discomfort, and treating it is very costly for the NHS.

“Focusing on prevention is not only better for the children, but is also a better use of NHS resources. I’m delighted to see the local authorities and the NHS taking innovative action to address this very important local health issue, and I hope others will follow suit.”

A number of new dental practices have recently opened in Lancashire to reduce the number of people on waiting lists for an NHS dentist.

Janice Nicholson, head of dental commissioning at NHS Central Lancashire, recently announced that dentists in Leyland and west Lancashire are now opening their doors to patients who are prepared to travel from central Lancashire in a further attempt to improve access.
Editorial comment

So it’s finally here... after what seems the longest time, dental professionals can finally have their say on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) registration fees now that the consultation documentation has been released.

The most cynical of you will be no doubt thinking it’s no bl**dy use anyway

Now, the most cynical of you will be no doubt thinking ‘no bl**dy use anyway, they’ll do what they want no matter what we say’ but a public consultation does have the advantage of being just that, public.

I am well aware of the strength of feeling against the CQC and the confusion and resentment that has been created, and I am also aware of how some quarters are using their right to protest by canvassing their MPs to investigate the necessity of extra regulation.

All stakeholders should have their say and at least make their sentiments known, if only to be able to say to yourself that you have. Who knows, someone may even be listening.

Snap-On Smile

In recent years, the number of people opting for cosmetic surgery has increased and continues to be popular with people who desire to improve the aesthetic appearance of their smile. Now, for those who fear needles and worry about drilling, a new treatment is available in the UK: The Snap-On Smile.

The Snap-On Smile does exactly what its name suggests; it fits onto the original teeth, much like false nails are placed over the top of nails.

Fitting over the teeth, the Snap-On Smile gives the illusion of a perfect smile, without the need for surgery. Patients who opt for this treatment can select a colour shade and choose the shape of the teeth.

For those who are worried about drilling and needles, and don’t want to pay hundreds or even thousands of pounds for treatments, such as veneers or dental implants, the Snap-On Smile would seem like a perfect option.

To make the Snap-On Smile photos and impressions are made of the patients’ teeth and in about four weeks the Snap-On Smile lab creates the smile.

The AOG and Smile-on in association with The Dental Directory bring you

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Dental experts warn against home whitening treatments

Dental experts have warned against home tooth whitening treatments, which have become increasingly popular in recent years.

Experts have urged members of the public to avoid home whitening treatments, which are often recommended by people with no dental training on internet sites. Many sites suggest using home treatments containing ingredients such as hydrogen peroxide, ash and baking soda.

Some sites also recommend methods including brushing the teeth with salt, soap and bleach.

Teeth whitening has become extremely popular in recent years, as people look to recreate the famous Hollywood smile adopted by so many models, actors and pop stars; however, the trend has caused people to seek to extreme measures to try and whiten their teeth and many people, especially young girls, are turning to the internet to find ways to whiten their teeth without paying hundreds of pounds.

There has been a ten-fold increase in the number of people undergoing whitening treatment in the last five years but for many, the price of professional treatment is thought not affordable.

Dental experts say the trend is alarming and have warned people to avoid using internet sites to find out about teeth whitening treatments. Experts say the methods often recommended by other members of the public are dangerous and potentially very damaging for the teeth. Some of the methods can break down the enamel covering on the tooth, leaving the teeth vulnerable to decay.

Dr Conway called for a change in the way people think about mouth cancer. Speaking at the launch of Mouth Cancer Action Month 2010, at the House of Commons this week, clinical senior lecturer in dental public health at the University of Glasgow, Dr David Conway, highlighted that those with a “low social economic status” were faced with significant increases in risks of developing the disease.

"I am writing to ask all readers and supporters of Dental Tribune to sponsor me and help make a difference.

I will be packing my walking Ganges for charity, led by Shweta Chari, an Electronics Engineer, Toybank aims to provide education to the “Door Step” of families and many other underprivileged families. Many of these children are not enrolled in school and have limited access to books and a place to study. Additionally, many children drop out of school to work or care for younger children.

With neither support nor resources at home some children also suffer from very low learning levels. Door Step School is trying to bridge this gap by bringing education to the “Door Step” of these underprivileged children.

• Toybank - Founded in 2004 by Swetha Chari, an Electronics Engineer, Toybank aims to reach out to children through eracy and play. Toybank acts as a leveller of the society by taking toys from those that can give and distributing them to the ones in need. Toybank dreams to place a toy in the hands of every child in India and the world.

"I am writing to ask all readers and supporters of Dental Tribune to sponsor me and help make a difference.

Please visit my JustGiving page (www.justgiving.com/seemasharma-britishindiafriendshipwalk) to find out more and donate. If you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

A call to action

Seema Sharma calls on Dental Tribune readers to support her as she walks 60 miles for charity...from Baroda to Bhurah!

“At the end of this month I will be packing my walking shoes to walk 60 miles of the 241 miles that Indian Friend- ship Walk for charity, led by Jill Beckingham (wife of the British deputy high commis- sioner in India, Peter Beckingham). Jill is retracing the steps of Mahatma Gandhi’s Salt March of 1930 to raise funds and awareness of some of which have a British Indian connection. She is aiming to raise funds for the three charities already supported by her Foundation:

• Apnalaya - An NGO founded in 1972 to help children living in slums towards a better life, Apnalaya strives to achieve this through urban community development projects in Mumbai. Its role is one of empowerment: of encouraging ordinary men and women to believe in themselves and in their abilities to change their lives for the better.

• Door Step School - is an NGO established in Mumbai, India in 1988 and later expanded to Pune in 1989. It was started with the aim of addressing literacy issues in marginalised sections of society. Door Step School provides education and support to the often-forgotten children of pavement dwellers, slum dwellers, construction site workers and children of the homeless of every child in India and the world.

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"CMA system is very simple and straightforward to use, producing consistently good results. The files are strong and stable and I have not had one fracture yet.

In these days of single-use files, the CMA system provides good value for money without compromising the need for well-instrumented root canals."

Dr Graeme Fisher BDS, Preston
Regarding Revalidation

Dentist Denis Toppin is on the Council of the GDC and is also Chair of its Revalidation Working Group. Most of you will probably be familiar with the term revalidation by now, although it’s likely you hear most about it in relation to doctors and the General Medical Council. The General Medical Council has recently confirmed medical revalidation in the UK is expected to start from late 2012, after numerous delays. Although the GDC doesn’t plan to introduce revalidation for dentists until 2014, and at a later date still for DCPS, the GDC has just launched a 12 week consultation on the issue and is encouraging as many of its registrants as possible to have their say. The consultation can be found on the GDC website at www.gdc-uk.org.

For those of you who are less familiar with revalidation and what it will mean for dentists, I’d like to take this opportunity to explain a little bit more about it. Revalidation will provide, for the very first time, a way of checking that dentists carry on meeting the GDC’s standards after they have first joined its registers. The GDC’s Fitness to Pracitce proceedings are reactive rather than proactive; they assume that dental professionals meet its standards unless the regulator receives information which suggests otherwise. With patient protection in mind, this is no longer good enough. Our research has shown that patients believe and expect that dental professionals’ compliance with standards is already checked by the GDC regularly. Davis and colleagues (2010) showed that patients believe and expect that dental professionals’ compliance with standards is already checked by the GDC regularly. However, the GDC’s Fitness to Practice proceedings are reactive rather than proactive; they assume that dental professionals meet its standards unless the regulator receives information which suggests otherwise. With patient protection in mind, this is no longer good enough. Our research has shown that patients believe and expect that dental professionals’ compliance with standards is already checked by the GDC regularly.

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The framework will also set out the evidence which will be acceptable to demonstrate compliance with each standard. Dentists will gather this evidence over five years, and revalidate at the end of each cycle. We are proposing a three-stage process at the end of each cycle:

- **Stage 1 - compliance check**, which will apply to all dentists
- **Stage 2 - remediation phase**, which will provide an opportunity to dentists who do not pass Stage 1 to remedy deficiencies
- **Stage 3 - in-depth assessment**, which will apply to dentists who fail to demonstrate their compliance at the end of the remediation phase.

The proposals aim to avoid over-regulation by making as much use of existing and developing quality systems within dentistry as possible. Dentists will, in many cases, already be required to show that they are meeting quality standards. For example, through NHS practice inspections or performance appraisals. Our approach is designed so that dentists can meet all our requirements and those of other dental service regulators under one umbrella.

**About the author**

Denis Toppin, a returning Registrant member to the Council of the GDC, was born in Glasgow where he returned to study and work. He qualified as a dentist in 1977 from the University of Glasgow and has been working in general dental practice ever since. He also taught undergraduate dental students clinical practice in restorative dentistry. He also teaches in numerous postgraduate courses through the University of Glasgow and has been working in general dental practice ever since. He developed an interest in dental education through his involvement in Dental Vocational Training as a Vocational Trainer, Adviser and Regional Adviser and through teaching undergraduate dental students clinical practice in restorative dentistry. He has also taught on numerous postgraduate courses through the University of Glasgow. He was a member of the Scottish Dental Practice Board for the maximum six year period. He currently holds a part-time post of Assistant Director of Postgraduate General Dental Practice Education with NHS Education for Scotland.
Judging panel announced

A team of leading dentistry experts has been revealed as the judging panel for the 5M ESPE Student Dentistry Awards 2010-2011.

This panel of influential industry figures and esteemed academics will select the UK and Ireland's most innovative students and award them with funding to support their studies.

The awards panel includes Dr Amarjit Gill, President of the British Dental Association; Edward Attenborough, President of the British Dental Trade Association; Professor Trevor Burke, from the University of Birmingham and Professor Nairn Wilson, Dean and Head of King's College London Dental Institute.

There are three categories in the 5M ESPE Student Dentistry Awards 2010-2011 – the Award for Innovation, the National Award for Innovation and the Award for Interrelated Studies. Funding ranging from £500 (554 EUR) to a bursary worth £3500 (4130 EUR) is available to be won.

Speaking about the announcement of the judges, 5M ESPE’s commercial manager Steve Foster said: “We are delighted to have such a strong panel judging our awards programme that supports the future of UK and Irish dentistry.

“As leading industry figures, the judges’ shared experience will ensure that the very best dental students are recognised for their abilities.”

On his appointment to the panel, Dr Amarjit Gill said: “An awards programme such as this offers real support to talented young dental students.

“I am very much looking forward to reading the entries and meeting the winners.”

For more details on the awards programme, visit 5M ESPE’s new dedicated student website at www.5mespe.co.uk/dentalstudents.

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