Name change
A dental assistant is auctioning her name on eBay to raise money for Children in Need. The auction winner can change her name to one in a list of 50 names listed - including Margie Simpson and Pat Butcher from EastEnders. Edine de Bont has already attracted 12 bids, the highest being £6,000 from the UK Deed Service to change her name to Pudsey Bear. Ms de Bont has agreed to change her name by deed poll for one year. Half of the proceeds will go to Children in Need with the rest going to her children.

UDA increase
Figures from the Department of Health have revealed that 82.5m Units of Dental Activity (UDAs) were commissioned for the three months running up to the end of September. This shows an increase of 1.5m, compared to the last quarter running up to the end of June, when 81m UDAs were commissioned. It is also 5.9m higher than the same period last year, when 78.7m were commissioned.

Registration figures
A total of 36,108 dentists have registered with the General Dental Council, according to its latest figures. It also revealed that 62,191 dental nurses, 7,544 dental technicians and 5,355 dental hygienists have registered.

Complaints increase
The Dental Complaints Service (DCS) logged 1,268 complaints over 31 per week. The General Dental Council recently held its first one-day public conference which sought to gather a range of views on dentistry, dental professionals and professional regulation.

GDC conference
The General Dental Council recently held its first one-day public conference Dental check-up – your views on protecting dental patients. Over 100 members of the public attended the event in Birmingham which sought to gather a range of views on dentistry, dental professionals and professional regulation. The topics covered included what are dental professionals good at and what could they do better. It discussed the issue of dental professionals being registered for many years and looked at what they should have to do to remain registered.

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Mouth Cancer calls ‘you’ for action
La crème de la crème of the dental profession gathered together last week at the Houses of Parliament to back Mouth Cancer Action Week 2008. Kicking off the launch, president of the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF), Dr Chris Potts thanked the sponsors and said: ‘We are announcing a name change today from Mouth Cancer Awareness week to Mouth Cancer Action week because it is time to take action, and it is absolutely fundamental that this event is supported from the top down.’

Supporting Dr Potts, British Dental Health Foundation’s chief executive, Dr Nigel Carter said: ‘With 25 per cent of people not recognising mouth cancer as a serious condition that will kill them, it is very important to promote awareness of the condition amongst the public.

‘The campaign over the next week is about media awareness and we are encouraging you to support the blue badge kit as it raises awareness and we want to encourage that.’

Denplan’s Sarah Bradbury said: ‘We feel it is extremely important that dentists spend the time with patients to check for mouth cancer but we feel confident that we are getting the awareness out there.’

British’s leading oral cancer specialist called on the government for backing to beat the disease. Explaining the mouth was among the top-three organs most susceptible to cancer causing carcinogens, Dr Sanam Warnakulasuriya said: ‘A lot needs to be done – and I am pleased we are here with politicians who have the will and the power to take this forward.

‘We have achieved a ban on public smoking, but we need to protect children from smoking, in terms of the way sales are restricted.’

Guest speaker and award-shortlisted novelist Lia Mills moved guests to tears with her real life account of diagnosis, treatment and recovery from oral cancer. Backing the Foundation’s campaign motto ‘if in doubt, get checked out’, She said: ‘After my sister died of breast cancer I sailed in and out of breast cancer clinics getting checked out, oblivious of the fact that my mouth was eating me.’
Mouth Cancer calls ‘you’ for action

No training spells danger warns experts

Implant experts are calling for a gold standard qualification for dentists offering implants, and for implantology to be a specialism in its own right.

The General Dental Council (GDC) recently reminded all dentists that they are only under- 
take procedures they are prop- erly trained in, after a number of dentists were found carrying out dental implants without proper training.

The GDC pointed to guidelines published by the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK), Training Standards in Implant Dentistry.

These say: ‘It is essential that the dentist carrying out this work has received suitable training, and has been assessed as compe- tent to do it.’

It adds: ‘This will normally in- volve that dentist taking a post- graduate training course in im- plant dentistry’. Dr Avik Danda- pat, one of the few dentists in the UK to hold the Diploma in Implan- tology from the Royal College of Surgeons, believes the guidance is rather vague and would like to see implantologists having to ad- hère to certain standards.

He said: ‘It’s fairly easy to do implants but very difficult to do them to the standard the Royal College demands. And, bluntly, these should be the standards that, if not mandatory, are those to which the profession aspires.’

He is concerned that there are ‘real dangers lying in wait for the dentist who has had insufficient training and/or does not invest in first class diagnostic equipment’.

Dr Dandapat, who is principal at the Dental Implant Centre in Twyford, Berkshire, believes that at the moment implantology stan- dards are not high enough and there is not sufficient regulation.

He would like to see a gold standard in terms of qualifica- tions for implant dentists.

He said: ‘Official guidelines are needed, not simply to ensure that training for implantologists is comprehensive, but that sur- gery set up is correct and that there is a real understanding of how to interpret a CT scan.’

In an increasingly litigious society, there is a real need for caution, he warned.

The risk of getting facial can- cer from a CT scan is very, very small (1 in 65,000), but the im- plantologist must be aware of this risk and keep exposure to the pa- tient to the minimum.

Bupak Dey, marketing coor- dinator at the dental implant maker, Nobel Biocare, agrees with Dr Dandapat, that ‘we are waiting for a mistake to happen before we improve implantology standards and protocol’.

He said: ‘It is not very regu- lated, the guidance is very vague and it needs tightening up. It would be good if there was some kind of certification and a mini- mum period of on the job training.’

Mr Dey warns that if this does- n’t happen, ‘we are going to see a huge court case hitting the headlines’.

‘We are going to see a situation where someone has been on a course, practised on a few dam- ages and when they come to practising on a patient, some- thing will go wrong. The patient will realise they have had virtu- ally no experience,’ he said.

He added: ‘When you look at the medical sector, it is highly regulated. Even pharmaceutical representatives have to hold a li- cence. There is nothing like that in the dental sector.’

Chris Netherclift, general man- ager of the dental implant com- pany, Badfortunds, said: ‘It is im- portant that the GDC guidelines are adhered to on implant dentistry.’

However he criticised the guidelines for not clarifying what is ‘appropriate training’ and said: ‘It is a bit of a loose area. At the moment training can be given by academic institutions and train- ing companies and the GDC needs to specify what are the pre- ferred training providers.’

He believes dentists need a certain level of experience before they start providing implants and would like to see it being manda- tory for them to work with mentors to get the experience they need.

At the moment Training Stan- dards in Implant Dentistry merely says dentists ‘should’ work with a mentor. It is not compulsory.

Mash Seriki, commercial di- rector at Smile-on, a company which provides training courses on how to carry out implants, is concerned that more and more dentists are being tempted to carry out the procedure without adequate training, because it is such a ‘lucrative treatment’.

According to Mr Seriki, one of the problems is that there are a lot of training courses out there but there is no way of knowing what is good and what is not.

‘This is quite an invasive treatment. This involves tapping the tooth out, drilling into the jawbone, putting a bit of titanium in, then the crown is added,’ he said.

Yet dentists can go on a two-day course and carry out implants. There is no register or formal cer- tificate saying this person has been trained to a certain level that has been agreed to as the standard across the country,’ he added.

Mr Seriki would like to see dentists having to gain a recog- nised formal qualification before they can practise implant den- tistry.

He would also like to see it be- ing given the same status as or- thodontics and recognised as a specialism in its own right.

However the British Dental Association (BDA) is content to stand by the training standards published this year by the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK), claiming it provides an ‘authori- tative source for requirements in this area’.

A BDA spokesman said: The BDA supports the General Den- tal Council’s view that dentists providing implants must be properly trained and competent to do so.

The BDA is engaged in sup- porting members who wish to provide implants for their pa- tients in ensuring they have the skills required to do so.

He added: ‘Dentists should also ensure that they have appro- priate indemnity arrangements in place.’

Chairman
Noam Tamir
Director
Dr Saman Warnakulasuriya
Managing Director
Mash Seriki
Editor
Penny Palmer
Tel: 01277 650379
penny@dentaltribuneuk.com
Marketing Manager
Laura McRae
Lauren@dentaltribuneuk.com
Advertising Director
Joe Appo
Tel: 020 7400 8969
Joef@dentaltribuneuk.com
Sales Manager
Joe Appo
joeappo@dentaltribuneuk.com
Editor
Noam Tamir
Noam@dentaltribuneuk.com
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