Mouth Cancer calls ‘you’ for action

A 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.’

Dentplan’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.’

Britain’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 Saman 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.’

Deadline for News

To be included in Dental Tribune, news should be submitted by 13 August 2008. Information can be telephoned to 01270 707107 or emailed to news@dental-tribune.co.uk.
Implants 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: ‘Every dentist undertaking procedures they are properly trained in, after a number of check-ups, can talk and I can sing, but I miss those long uninhibited yawns. But I urge all of you to think about your mouth, just for a minute – how will you use yours today?’

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As well as Under-secretary for health Ann Keen MP supporting this week’s launch, attendees were joined by shadow front bench health minister Mike Penning MP, Labour health campaigner Rosse Cooper MP, chief dental officer of England Dr Barry Cockcroft, Welsh counterpart Dr Paul Langanmaid and the BDA’s chief executive Peter Ward.

The Foundation’s campaign week, which began on 16 November, calls for action on mouth cancer – whether wearing the campaigns Blue Ribbon Appeal badge, visiting the dentist for a check-up, or self examination for ulcers which do not heal within three weeks, red and white patches in the mouth, or unusual lumps and swellings.

Mouth Action Week ran from 16 to 22 November, and was sponsored by Denplan, Dental Design, VirginLite-Plus and the British Dental Association (BDA).