tooth decay from children to adults. The curative approach to treating dental caries and periodontal disease in regularly attending asymptomatic adults.

The finding has important ramifications for service design in public-funded health systems. Researchers from the UK, the US and Australia prepared the diagnostic test accuracy of hygienists’ performance compared to GDPs. Richard Macey, lead author of the study and research assistant at the dental school, told medicalnewstoday.com: “In particular, hygiene therapists were good at identifying those patients the GDP had confirmed were caries free and at identifying periodontal disease where the dentists confirmed its presence.”

The study, titled “The efficacy of screening for common dental diseases by hygiene-therapists: A diagnostic test accuracy study,” was published online on 20 January in the Journal of Dental Research.

The findings, which are part of the latest Global Burden of Disease study, involved a systematic review of all data on untreated dental decay annually owing to neglected care within the UK. According to the researchers, role substitution in primary dental care may be a promising option for reducing costs, releasing the GDP’s time and increasing the capacity to care for those who do not currently access services. Throughout the UK, only about 50 per cent of the population attend the dentist. The other half is generally socio-economically disadvantaged and experiences the majority of dental diseases. Each dental practice across North West England took part in the study and 1,899 asymptomatic adult patients were screened. Visual screening by hygiene therapists was taken as the index test and the GDP acted as the reference standard. The primary outcomes measured were the sensitivity and specificity values for dental caries and periodontal disease.

The results of the study showed that the hygiene therapists performed comparably to the GDPs. Richard Macey, lead author of the study and research assistant at the dental school, told medicalnewstoday.com: “In particular, hygiene therapists were good at identifying those patients the GDP had confirmed were caries free and at identifying periodontal disease where the dentists confirmed its presence.”

Hygiene therapists performed comparably to the GDPs in the study.

### Billions to suffer from untreated decay

**LONDON, UK:** Despite worldwide efforts to improve oral health, a global study has found that 39 per cent of the world’s population currently suffers from untreated caries in their permanent teeth. It also established that 621 million children worldwide have tooth decay that goes without dental care. To make things worse, hundreds of millions of new cases are expected to add to the burden of dental decay. Children aged 1 to 14 years old, across 74 countries, currently suffer from untreated carious lesions in their permanent teeth. It also established that 35 per cent of the world’s population currently access services. Throughout the UK, it is now theoretically possible to delay the need for GDPs to undertake the check-ups on a regular basis. This is possible because if left untreated it can cause severe pain, mouth infection and it can negatively impact children’s growth. Marcenes explained that the study underscores the vital need to develop effective oral health promotion strategies. The study, titled “The efficacy of screening for common dental diseases by hygiene-therapists: A diagnostic test accuracy study,” was published online on 20 January in the Journal of Dental Research.

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Every hero has a helper.
Our toothbrush, clearly, what a hero! But what about the 30% of the tooth surface that even this toothbrush cannot reach – between the teeth? This is where a hero’s helper enters the scene in the shape of a Curaprox ultrafine interdental brush. It is easier, more enjoyable and even more effective than dental floss. So, for 100% oral care: recommend the superduo. Offer: info@curaden.ch
Study finds e-learning as good as traditional training for health professionals

By Dental Tribune

LONDON, UK: Electronic learning could enable millions more students to train as doctors and nurses worldwide, according to the latest research. A review commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) and carried out by Imperial College London researchers concluded that e-learning is likely to be as effective as traditional methods for training health professionals. These new findings support the approach to continuing education Dental Tribune International (DTI) has adopted with its free online education platform for dental professionals.

The Imperial team, led by Dr Josip Car, carried out a systematic review of the scientific literature to evaluate the effectiveness of e-learning for undergraduate health professional education. They conducted separate analyses on online learning, which requires an Internet connection, and offline learning, delivered via CD-ROMs or USB flash drives, for example.

The findings, drawn from a total of 108 studies, showed that students acquire knowledge and skills through online and offline e-learning as well as or better than they do through traditional teaching.

E-learning, the use of electronic media and devices in education, is already used by some universities to support traditional campus-based teaching or to enable distance learning. Wider use of e-learning might help to address the need to train more health workers across the globe. According to a recent WHO report, the world is short of 7.2 million health care professionals, and the figure is growing.

The authors suggest that combining e-learning with traditional teaching might be suitable for health care training, as practical skills must also be acquired.

According to Car, from the School of Public Health at Imperial, “E-learning programmes could potentially help address the shortage of healthcare workers by enabling greater access to education, especially in the developing world the need for more health professionals is greatest.”

While the study focused on the education of students, DTI follows a similar approach to continuing education, offering webinars via its Dental Tribune Study Club, which it launched in 2009. The platform regularly offers free online courses and in several languages. The wide range of topics includes general dentistry, digital dentistry, practice management, as well as specialties, such as implantology and endodontontology. The webinars are presented by experienced speakers and participants are awarded continuing education credits.