Public ‘need more education’ on dental products

The British Dental Health Foundation survey reveals some worrying statistics about the public’s dental product education

A study undertaken by the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) has revealed that although dental products may be commodities that find their way into everybody’s shopping trolley, only a quarter (26 per cent) of people understand what ingredients they are made from and their purpose.

The findings, which have been published by the British Dental Health Foundation as part of this month’s National Smile Month campaign, worryingly revealed that 35 per cent of people failed to understand the ingredients that were contained in their dental products and a further 44 per cent only partly understood what was contained in them.

Participants were also asked if they felt it was important that manufacturers’ product claims were clinically proven and not exaggerated; the results indicated that half the people questioned felt that independent testing was important and less than a quarter of the people felt that such testing was ‘extremely important’.

Out of the remaining participants, 20 per cent were indifferent to independent testing, whilst the remaining felt such means were unimportant.

The survey also revealed that approaching three quarters (72 per cent) of people did not always believe the product claims made on dental products.

The Foundation believes the issues are connected and has announced plans to publish a glossary of common ingredients and their purpose to help educate and inform consumers.

Dr Nigel Carter, Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, said: “The Foundation has a long track record of helping to educate the public on all aspects of oral health issues. For nearly 20 years, we have been raising awareness of oral health and care products to ensure that more people to make an informed choice about which products to buy and how it can help their oral health. Consumers can also find a list of approved products on our website at www.dentalhealth.org”, said Dr Carter.

“Providing consumers with more information about ingredients is a natural extension of our charitable work in this area. When you glance down the ingredients list of a typical toothpaste or mouthwash it is easy to see why people may have some difficulties. Even common ingredients like water may sometimes be described in terms that not everyone will understand such as ‘aqua’.

“We hope our new glossary of common ingredients will help more people to make an informed choice about which products to buy and how it can help their oral health. Consumers can also find a list of approved products on our website at www.dentalhealth.org,” said Dr Carter.

Neck-loose tooth
KESHA is asking her fans for an unusual donation - she wants their teeth! The singer, who has repeatedly hit the headlines for her controversial comments and stunts (one such stunt earlier this year saw her drinking blood from an animal heart during a gig) now wants to make a quirky necklace out her fans' molars. She is appealing to her devotees to offer up their molars and according to a report KESHA's motivation to make the necklace happened after a fan sent her a tooth. She was reported as saying on Twitter.com: “I’ve received one tooth from a fan. I made it into a necklace. But now I really wanna make a fan tooth necklace to wear to an awards show.” Hopefully fans won’t take this too literally and start pulling their teeth out!

Dental headache
The cause of your headaches could actually be the way teeth are positioned when jaws are together, otherwise known as dental occlusion. When the jawline causes pressure to be put on the nerves, muscles and blood vessels that pass near the head, the result can be headaches and migraines, a condition that affects one in seven people in the UK, Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, believes. The British Dental Health Foundation survey reveals some worrying statistics about the public’s dental product education

Clearer food labelling
Diabetes UK, the British Heart Foundation, Children’s Food Campaign and consumer watchdog Which? have written to the health secretary to demand better labelling on food. The organisations are concerned that at present, shoppers find it hard to determine the nutritional content of the food they are buying. They want the UK’s representatives in Europe to back mandatory front-of-pack labelling during an EU vote on the issue in July, including information on energy, fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt.

www.dental-tribune.co.uk
Editorial comment

M’s stars already!
If anyone knows
where this year has
gone can somebody
please tell me!

The issue with
tooth whitening seems to be
rumbling on, with the BDA re-
portedly now having written
to the Department for Business,
Innovation and Skills, the
body responsible for trading
standards. The letter calls for
talks to address the inconsist-
encies in the current situation
and the way in which differing
trading standards offices are
enforcing the rules governing
tooth bleaching products. Den-
tal Tribune’s Laura Hatton has
written an interesting article on
the latest situation in this issue –
go to pages nine and ten for
more!

Also the Dispatches pro-
grame has roused much in-
terest in dental circles, even if it
does seem to only be in dental
circles! DT has taken a retro-
spective look at the programme –
pages 11-12 is the place to look.

Finally, let me know what
you think on any issues relat-
ing to dentistry (or rugby for
that matter – I love a good sports
coval) get in touch
and we may contact you
for an opinion
piece! Email me lisa@
dentaltribuneuk.com, I’d love to hear
from you.

Do you have an opinion or some-
ting to say on any Dental Tribune
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GDC announce
Deputy Chair

The General Dental Coun-
cil (GDC) has announced
that Derek Prentice has
been elected as Deputy Chair of
the GDC.

Derek, who has been an ap-
pointed lay member of Council
since 1999, is currently the man-
aging director of a consultancy
company and previously held
a number of executive appoint-
ments, including assistant director
with the Consumers’ Association
and president of the Bureau of Eu-
ropean Consumer Unions.

Derek has also held a number
of non-executive positions within
NHS bodies and is currently a
trustee of The British Home –
which is an independent charity
that provides specialised nursing
and social care for people with
long term medical conditions and
severe disabilities. He will hold the
post of Deputy Chair of the GDC
until a permanent Chair is elected
by the GDC in September this year.

Derek said: “I am pleased to
take up this position and I look
forward to working with my fel-
low Council members and the Ex-
ecutive as we tackle the challenges
facing the General Dental Council
in the months ahead.”

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New Chief Dental Officer for Wales

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he Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Tony Jewell, has announced that David Thomas has been appoint-

ed as Wales’ new Chief Dental Officer.

Mr Thomas qualified as a dentist in Cardiff in 1976 and was appointed as Deputy Chief Den-
tal Officer to the Welsh Government in 2010. Later in 2010 he was named Acting Chief Dental

Officer (CDO) following the retire-
tement of the previous CDO, Dr Paul Langmaid.

Thomas has taken up the role with immediate effect and is responsible for providing high

quality and professional advice to Welsh Government Ministers.

Ancient teeth raise questions

D

T USA: Eight small teeth found in an Israeli cave raise big questions about the ear-
est existence of humans and where we may have originat-
ed, Binghamton University anthro-
pologist Rolf Quam says. Quam is part of an international team of

researchers, led by Israel Hershbo-
vitz of Tel Aviv University, that has examined the dental discovery and

recently published joint findings in the American Journal of Physical

Anthropology.

Excavated at Qesem cave, a pre-
historic site near Rosh Haain in cen-
tral Israel that was uncov-
ered in 2000, the teeth are similar in size and shape to those of mod-
ern man, Homo sapiens, which have been found at other sites is

Israel, such as Oafzeh and Skhul — but they’re a lot older than any

previously discovered remains.

“The Qesem teeth come from a time period between 200,000 and 400,000 years ago when hu-

man remains from the Middle East are very scarce,” Quam says. “We have numerous remains of Nean-
nderthals and Homo sapiens from more recent times, that is around

60,000 to 150,000 years ago, but fossils from earlier time periods are rare. So these teeth are provid-
ing us with some new information about who the earlier occupants of this region were as well as their

potential evolutionary relation-
ships with the later fossils from this same region.”

The teeth also present new evidence as to where modern man might have originated. If the re-
mains from Qesem can be linked directly to the Homo sapiens spe-
cies, it could mean that modern man either originated in what is now Israel or may have migrated

from Africa far earlier than is now thought.

in relation to dentistry policy, the practice of dentistry and the pro-

motion of good oral health.

In a press release issued by the Welsh Assembly Gov-

ernment, Dr Jewell said: “I am pleased to announce the appointment of David Thomas as our new Chief Dental Officer for Wales.

“David brings to the role a background in community den-
tistry, dental public health as well as a record in academia, in both a management and re-

search role. He has published widely in academic dental jour-
nals and has been involved in the manage-ment of Dental Postgrad-
uate Education.

“I would like to thank David for his work as acting Chief Den-
tal Officer since the retirement of Paul Langmaid, and look for-
ward to working with him in his new role.”

Mr Thomas said: “I am de-

lighted to have been appointed to the role of Chief Dental Officer for Wales and look forward to working with the Welsh Govern-

ment Ministers on the many aspects of dental policy and prac-
tice, including promoting and improving the dental health of the people of Wales.”

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T USA: Eight small teeth found in an Israeli cave raise big questions about the earliest existence of humans and where we may have originat-ed, Binghamton University anthropologist Rolf Quam says. Quam is part of an international team of researchers, led by Israel Hershbo-vitz of Tel Aviv University, that has examined the dental discovery and recently published joint findings in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology.

Excavated at Qesem cave, a prehistoric site near Rosh Haain in central Israel that was uncovered in 2000, the teeth are similar in size and shape to those of modern man, Homo sapiens, which have been found at other sites in Israel, such as Oafzeh and Skhul – but they’re a lot older than any previously discovered remains.

“The Qesem teeth come from a time period between 200,000 and 400,000 years ago when human remains from the Middle East are very scarce,” Quam says. “We have numerous remains of Neanderthals and Homo sapiens from more recent times, that is around 60,000 to 150,000 years ago, but fossils from earlier time periods are rare. So these teeth are providing us with some new information about who the earlier occupants of this region were as well as their potential evolutionary relationships with the later fossils from this same region.”

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“David brings to the role a background in community dentistry, dental public health as well as a record in academia, in both a management and research role. He has published widely in academic dental journals and has been involved in the management of Dental Postgraduate Education.

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Alcohol-related hospital admissions top one million

The number of admissions to hospital in England related to alcohol has topped one million, according to The NHS Information Centre’s annual report, Statistics on Alcohol: England 2011. Statistics show there were 1,057,000 such admissions in 2009/10. This is up 12 per cent on the 2008/09 figure (945,500) and more than twice as many as in 2002/03 (510,800).

Of these admissions, nearly two thirds (65 per cent) were for men. Among all adults there were more admissions in the older age groups than in the younger age groups.

New prescriptions data shows that alcohol dependence cost the NHS £2.41 million in prescription items in 2010. This is up 1.4 per cent on the 2009 figure (£2.58 million) and up 40 per cent since 2005 (£1.72 million).

There were 160,181 prescriptions issued for alcohol dependency per 100,000 of the population. Regionally, the figures for prescription items per 100,000 of the population were highest in the North West (515 items) and North East (410 items) and lowest in London (150 items).

The data on alcohol related hospital admissions and new data on prescriptions is published in the report, along with previously published information from a range of sources about drinking behaviours and health outcomes in England.

The NHS Information Centre chief executive Tim Straughan said that the “report shows the number of people admitted to hospital each year for alcohol related problems has topped one million for the first time. The report also highlights the increasing cost of alcohol dependency to the NHS as the number of prescription items dispensed continues to rise.

“This report provides health professionals and policy makers with a useful picture of the health issues relating to alcohol use and misuse. It also highlights the importance of policy makers and health professionals in recognising and tackling alcohol misuse which in turn could lead to savings for the NHS.”

Help make dental history

A project to build a comprehensive living history of dentistry, the John McLean Archive, is seeking participants from across the UK to help make dental history. Volunteers are also being sought to carry out oral history interviews with dentists and dental care professionals across the UK. The transcripts of these interviews, which will focus on different aspects of the development of dentistry, will also be published as part of the project.

Volunteers must have a connection to dentistry, good listening skills and an interest in dental history. Volunteers selected to take part will receive training in oral history and the use of the recording equipment that will be used in the interviews.

Individuals interested in participating in either strand of activity contact Sophie Riches, the John McLean Archive project co-ordinator at the BDA Museum. Telephone 020 7585 4549, email sophie.riches@bda.org or visit the BDA Museum stand at the 2011 British Dental Conference and Exhibition.

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The second witness seminar for the project, which will take place at the British Dental Association’s (BDA’s) London headquarters on 26 October 2011, will focus on changes in dentistry since 1948. Discussion is expected to concentrate on topics including the introduction of the NHS, payment and contracts, developments in equipment and evolution of private practice. Participants in the project’s first witness seminar, which took place in March and looked at the development of the regulation of dentistry, included past Presidents of the BDA and General Dental Council, three deans of dental schools and a former dean of the Dental Faculty of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. It was chaired by Professor Nairn Wilson, Dean of King’s College London Dental Institute. Deliberations from each of the witness seminars will be published and placed in the John McLean Archive via the BDA Museum’s website: www.bda.org/museum.

Could bullying be linked to dental appearance?

According to a report published in the latest issue of the Journal of the British Dental Association (BJDJ), one in eight adolescents with prominent, or irregular shaped teeth have experienced bullying, with a negative impact on their self-esteem and quality of their oral health.

The authors, hospital-based orthodontic specialists, found that the children, aged between 10 and 14 years, were at an increased risk of being teased or bullied by their peers if they had certain dental features: these included maxillary overcrowding; a cleft lip, with or without a cleft palate; an overjet and a deep overbite (ie prominent teeth).

The specialists also expressed concern that psychosocial factors are not considered when assessing a child’s need for orthodontic treatment, although they acknowledged that the relationship between the shape of teeth, self-esteem and bullying is a complex one.

“Currently the severity and need for orthodontic treatment within the UK is judged on occlusal [bite] and aesthetic impairment without consideration of psychosocial factors,” warn the authors of the British Dental Journal report.

Commenting on the report’s findings, the British Dental Association’s Scientific Adviser, Prof Damien Walmsey, said: “As studies show that having well-aligned teeth can influence our ability to make friends and progress in our careers, it’s not surprising that young children pick up on society’s ideal of what is perceived to be attractive early on.

“Because prominent or irregular shaped teeth can affect a child’s self-esteem, or make them the subject of teasing or bullying at school, it’s important that these factors are taken into account when referrals for orthodontic treatment are considered.”

Bullying in schoolchildren - its relationship to dental appearance and psychosocial implications: an update for general dental practitioners, by J Seehra, JT Newton, and AT Difilasi, was published in the British Dental Journal, volume 210, No 9, May 14, 2011.
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Wesleyan Medical Sickness’ Junior Advisory Board meets in Birmingham

Some of the brightest young doctors in medicine and dentistry have gathered in Birmingham to discuss the impacts of changes to the National Health Service and how Wesleyan Medical Sickness can aid young doctors and dentists.

Wesleyan Medical Sickness’ Junior Advisory Board is made up of a select group of doctors, medical and dental students from across the UK. The group, the first of its kind in the financial services sector, provides insight into issues affecting young medical and dental professionals, ensuring Wesleyan continues to serve their needs throughout their career.

Sally Lovell, Student Liaison Manager at Wesleyan, said: “Understanding our customers is an important part of what Wesleyan Medical Sickness does. The Junior Advisory Board provides a vital insight into the needs of young medical and dental professionals, meaning we can continuously improve our products and services.”

The Junior Advisory Board complements Wesleyan’s main Medical Sickness Advisory Board, which is made up of eminent members of the medical and dental profession, including Professor Parveen Kumar, past president of the British Medical Association and current president of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Dr Ben Attwood, president of the Junior Advisory Board and a registrar junior doctor working at Oxford Deanery, added: “I’ve been a policy holder with Wesleyan Medical Sickness since I was a medical student. I think there are a variety of pressures facing junior doctors and medical students these days and the members of the Junior Advisory Board can offer a unique insight into their wants and needs.

“There has been a huge increase in medical student debt by the time people qualify, as well as pressure in the early years trying to find a job. Those jobs are no longer for life and there’s absolutely no guarantee you will be able to follow the specialty you’d like to do or pursue it in the place you’d like to work. This can be really challenging for young graduates, which is why they need support from organisations that have an understanding of what they are going through.

“This is where we on Wesleyan’s advisory boards can help.”

The meeting was held at Wesleyan’s head office in central Birmingham. The Junior Advisory Board provides a useful development opportunity for young medical and dental professionals, as well as allowing them to see how organisations such as Wesleyan operate.

Dean honoured at Brescia

The Dean of King’s College London, Professor Naim Wilson, has been honoured by the University of Brescia with the conferment of the title of Cultore Della Materia delle discipline Odontostomatologiche – the University’s equivalent of Visiting Professor, during his attendance at the most successful ninth Anglo-Italian Colloquium held in Brescia between 5 and 8 May.

Regarding his new title, Professor Wilson said in King’s College London press release: “I am deeply honoured to have had the title of Cultore Della Materia delle discipline Odontostomatologiche conferred on me by the University of Brescia. This is a tremendous accolade, which I will greatly treasure. I wish the highly successful, long-established collaboration between the Dental Institute and the Dental School of the University of Brescia every success in the future.

I will endeavour to attend the special celebrations being planned for 2012 to mark the tenth anniversary of the launch of the now truly international annual Anglo-Italian Colloquium.”

An honest British Smile for start of 2011

Instinctively, we all know the power of a wonderful smile. But research from the US now suggests that the British smile itself can be something to smile about.

Psychologist Dacher Keltner has analysed US and UK smiles and the 45 facial muscles used to produce them. He found such sharp differences between the way Americans and Brits smile that researchers could spot the difference accurately over 90 per cent of the time.

The British smile by pulling the lips back and upwards, exposing the lower teeth, whilst Americans part their lips and stretch the corners of their mouths. We Brits are more likely to raise our cheeks when we smile, showing crow’s feet at the corners of the eyes - giving rise to a more sincere smile which is harder to fake. The most representative British smile was considered to be restrained but dignified - which the scientists have titled “The Prince Charles”. Most US smiles by contrast are far less expressive!

So, we Brits may have a head start in the global smile league, but too often we throw our advantage away through poor oral hygiene and strained teeth.

However, Dr Harvey Graham, Clinical Director of Smilepod, said: “Thanks to our obsession with film and TV stars, most of the people who visit Smilepod are looking for a nicer genuine smile. Smilepod concentrates on those key treatments people really want - cleaner, whiter and straighter teeth in really convenient locations with life friendly times and a customer friendly people.”

‘Change is here to stay’

Bridge2Aid used this year’s BDA Annual Conference in Manchester to thank the dental profession for their support over the last nine years and to announce their ambitious plans for the future. With millions living in pain and with no access to even basic oral care.

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Bridge2Aid used this year’s BDA Annual Conference in Manchester to thank the dental profession for their support over the last nine years and to announce their ambitious plans for the future. With millions living in pain and with no access to even basic oral care. The B2A team spent the weekend raising awareness of dental pain, and emergency dental pain.

Talking about their vision for the future, B2A outlined the difference the DVP and training of rural health workers in emergency dental treatment can make to eradicate dental pain, and how dental professionals can get involved in making a tangible, lasting difference.

Mark Topley said: “The work to change our logo and adjust our messaging represents us entering a phase when we will honour and continue all that has been achieved at Bukumbi, whilst actively pursuing expansion of the DVP and emergency dental training, which has become the larger part of what we do. While our targets are ambitious, we have all been overwhelmed by the support shown by the profession and look forward to the next phase of B2A.”

Showcasing a new logo and a stronger message that stretches throughout the world, B2A demonstrated their commitment to the future. With B2A Founder Dr Ian Wilson returning to the UK, the dental charity will be taking leaps and bounds forward over the coming months and years and calls on the profession for their ongoing support to help in their quest to free the world from dental pain.

To find out how you can support B2A further or for more details on their Dental Volunteer Programme contact Ruth Bowyer, Vistings Administrator, on 07748 645006 or email her at Ruth@bridge2aid.org. Alternatively visit www.bridge2aid.org to download an application form.

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