Mouth cancer is ‘most frightening’ cancer

November is Mouth Cancer Action Month, a campaign organised by the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) that aims to raise awareness of the risks and symptoms of the disease.

Dental practices across the UK are being encouraged to check patients for signs of mouth cancer and make people aware of the four main risk factors for the disease: smoking, drinking alcohol to excess, poor diet and the human papillomavirus (HPV) often transmitted through oral sex.

The importance of the campaign is shown through latest figures which show that more than half of us are more frightened of developing mouth cancer (50.5 per cent) than other cancers. The research, conducted on behalf of the British Dental Health Foundation and Denplan, also found that 75 per cent don’t think they’re at risk from mouth cancer.

It is estimated that around 60,000 people in the UK will be diagnosed with mouth cancer in the next decade. Without early detection, an estimated 50,000 will die.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the BDHF, said: “Tobacco use and drinking alcohol excessively can increase the risk of developing mouth cancer by up to 30 times. Excess drinking and smoking, not eating a healthy diet and the human papillomavirus (HPV) will overwhelm the disease.”

Throughout the campaign we urge everyone to take action and visit their dentist. They are in the best position to check your mouth thoroughly for signs and symptoms of the disease.”

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The campaign is a great opportunity for the public to learn about the risks and what to look out for. Ulcers that do not heal within three weeks, red and white patches and unusual lumps or swellings in the mouth should not be ignored. Our advice is clear – if in doubt, get checked out.”

Turn to page six for more information about Mouth Cancer Action Month.
‘Beckoning’ immune cells may treat gum disease

Researchers set out to evaluate carries prevalence in non-syndromic patients with cleft lip and/or palate (CLP) in comparison with a matched non-CLP population.

The researchers from The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto conducted a literature search in order to identify articles reporting on the prevalence of carries in CLP versus non-CLP individuals.

Seven studies were used in the review, and involved a total of 474 CLP patients aged 1.5-29 years. When looking at permanent teeth, data from five of the studies suggest that CLP patients have a higher number of decayed, missing and filled (DMF) teeth than the controls, and for deciduous teeth, data from four of the studies suggest that CLP patients have a higher number of DMF teeth than the controls.

The researchers conclude that non-syndromic patients with CLP tend to have higher carries prevalence, both in the permanent and the deciduous dentition, in comparison with matched non-CLP controls.

Unregistered dental therapist prosecuted

Ms Penvose was still practising, despite being removed from the register. It was alleged that she had provided her employer with forged copies of her certificate of registration and indemnity insurance certificate.

Ms Penvose was arrested by South Yorkshire Police on 15 October 2015 and admitted to the offences, as well as admitting to treating more than 3,500 patients during the period that she was not registered.

On 1 November 2015 she appeared at Barnsley Magistrates’ Court and pleaded guilty. She was sentenced to a 12 month conditional discharge and ordered to pay a £5 victim surcharge.

Tobacco-purchasing age raised to 21 in NY

New York City Council has approved a measure that will raise the tobacco-purchasing age to 21.

The current purchasing age is 18 but the new bill will see it make it illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to buy cigarettes, certain tobacco products and even electronic cigarettes. The council also approved another bill that will set a minimum price of $10.50 for a pack of cigarettes.

“This will literally save many, many lives,” said City Councilman James Gennaro, whose mother and father died from tobacco-related diseases.

New York is the biggest city in the US to ban cigarette sale to 19- and 20-year olds. Similar legislation is expected to pass in New Jersey during December 2015, and the state of New York is also considering a similar proposal.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has 30 days to sign the bills into law. The minimum age bill will then take effect 180 days after enactment.

“We know that tobacco dependence can begin very soon after a young person first tries smoking so it’s critical that we stop young people from smoking before they even start,” said Bloomberg.

‘More openness and transparency’ for NHS

NHSE England will announce new measures that it says will increase public participation as part of its pledge to openness and transparency.

The new commitments include publishing more clinical level data, publishing more overarching clinical indicators, linking data from GP practices to data from all hospitals, and extending the ‘Friends and Family Test’ (a programme that asks patients whether they would recommend hospital services) to cover GP practices.

“These new measures come as the Prime Minister calls for more transparent government. David Cameron will address the 60 nations represented at the Open Government Partnership (held in London on 51 Oct 2015) and raise this issue.

Tim Kelsey, NHSE England’s National Director for Patients and Information, said: “This is the single most important step forward in transparency for healthcare anywhere in the world.

“The English healthcare system is already one of the most transparent in the world – publishing more information than any other country. But these new measures will transform outcomes, put citizens at the centre of everything we do and will provide the means by which NHS England will be at the cutting edge of medical science.”

Can I see your ID please?
Editorial comment

Welcome to November’s issue of Dental Tribune.

Well, unless you actually don’t leave your practice, you cannot help but notice that November is Mouth Cancer Action Month (MCAM).

Detection at an early stage is critical so if MCAM is a timely reminder to both the public and healthcare professionals that ‘if in doubt, get checked out’.

Awareness event and screening sessions are being held all over the country – if you are a practice getting involved, let us know!

Take a look at pages 6-7 for more on the campaign, or go to the dedicated website – www.mouthcancer.org.

A second report which looked at food expenditure and nutrition in the UK published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), the research was presented as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science on 4 November 2013.

“Gluttony in England? Long-term change in diet” describes changes in households’ calorie purchases since 1980. It shows that although the average weight of an adult male has increased by 9.6 kilograms, and the weight of an adult females by 7.9 kilograms, there has been a substantial reduction in calories purchased.

Calories purchased from eating out, soft drinks, snacks and confectionery increased over the period for all but young single households with particularly big increases for older single households (70 per cent) and couples with children (56 per cent). However, most calories are bought for consumption at home, and the decline in calories from food at home was much larger than the increase in calories from eating out, soft drinks, snacks and confectionery.

Melanie Lührmann, one of the authors of the report said: “We were surprised to find that there has been a substantial decline in total calories purchased at a time when obesity has increased.

“Purchases of snack foods, soft drinks and food out have increased, and now account for a greater share of calories for most households. However, calories purchased for consumption at home have declined strongly and account for the bulk of household foods purchases. This does not mean that poor diet plays no part in rising obesity. But understanding the interaction between diet and physical activity is clearly crucial.”

A second report which looked at food expenditure and nutritional quality over the recession (from 2005 to 2012). It found that the average real food spending fell by 8.5 per cent from 2005-7 to 2010-12, as food spending in cash terms failed to keep up with rising food prices. From 2007 to 2012 the price of food rose by 10.2 per cent more than the price of all goods.
Consider your colleagues in need this Christmas

While Christmas can be a very joyous occasion, for some it can bring a period of struggle. For dentists who have found themselves in serious financial crisis, this time of year can sometimes mean deciding whether you can afford to heat your home and feed your family, rather than how you are going to celebrate over the festive season.

At this crucial time of year many dentists turn to the BDA Benevolent Fund for help.

Dr Ann Rockey, Chairman of the Fund, says: “Please consider your colleagues in need this Christmas. We all know what an expensive time of year it is with increased fuel bills, the ever-increasing costs of a supermarket shop, Christmas and the GDC Annual Retention Fee on top. Every year we have requests for assistance from dentists in need.

In recent years there has been a threefold increase in the number of applicants who are in difficulties with their commissioning bodies or the GDC.”

Vital funds have already been raised by 80 dentists and their partners who took to the dance floor and raised £2,485 for the Fund. Organised by the Dental Nurses’ Benevolent Fund for help. Dr Ann Rockey for the Board of Trustees of the Fund, the dinner dance was held at the Cardiff Village Hotel in April.

For more information, call 020 7446 4499, email administrator@dentalbenevolventfund.org or visit www.bdabenevolventfund.org.uk.

Fizzy drinks tax could reduce obesity by 180,000

Researchers from the University of Oxford and University of Reading carried out the study, which is published in the British Medical Journal. It was found that the tax could also raise more than £275 million for the Treasury.

Sugar drinks (fizzy drinks, squashes and cordials) have been shown to increase the risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and tooth decay. They only suppress appetite weakly, so consuming fewer sugary drinks is unlikely to result in an increased intake of other sources of calories.

For the study, the researchers used a large survey of shopping preferences of families in the UK to estimate how purchases of sugary drinks would change in response to a 20 per cent increase in their price.

The research suggests that purchases of sugary drinks would reduce by around 15 per cent, with the expected reduction in energy intake being 28 calories per person per week. This would reduce the number of obese adults by 180,000 in the UK, it was estimated.

Professor Richard Tiffin of the University of Reading says: “Obesity is a ticking time bomb. Doing nothing risks condemning millions of people to poor health and an early grave. This is a complex battle in which a soft drinks tax could be a useful weapon, but on its own would not go far enough in the face of such a massive problem. Sedentary lifestyles, poor education, addiction to alcohol and tobacco, and poverty all play far more significant roles than fizzy drinks in causing bad health.”

NHS Direct to close down

The NHS Direct service ran from the late 1990s until April this year, when the 111 service was launched. The 111 service was split into 46 different contracts and NHS Direct won 11 of them. However, due to lower payment per call compared to when it ran the old 0845 number and lower call volumes than expected, NHS Direct lost £2.9m from April to June and was heading for a deficit of £26m if it continued until March.

NHS Direct also runs a number of other services, including an information website, GP appointments booking phone line and complaints service. Many of these are expected to be transferred to other parts of the health service.

NHS England has overseen arrangements to transfer 111 services currently provided by NHS Direct to a range of providers, predominantly ambulance trusts.

The NHS Direct group in Wales is unaffected.

Stopstober challenge reaches new high

This year saw the largest amount of people taking part in Stopstober, the mass 28-day stop smoking challenge.

Nearly quarter of a million people in England and Wales took part in the campaign and gave up smoking.

Research shows that stopping smoking for 28 days can extend your life by up to one week if you remain smoke-free. If those who gave up quit for good, they could collectively add as much as 4,700 years of life to the population.

The benefits aren’t only health-related; there are major savings in time and money too. The average smoker has 15 cigarettes a day. Stopstober would save them £141 each over four weeks, and if they remained smoke-free, they could save £1,690 in a year. Plus, the average cigarette takes approximately four minutes to smoke, so this Stopstober could have saved the average smoker over 24 hours by not smoking.

Simon Stevens appointed new NHS boss

Sir David Nicholson on 1 April 2014. He has worked as an NHS manager, a health advisor to Labour, and is currently working for United Healthcare as its global health president.

Chairman Professor Sir Malcolm Grant said: “I am delighted that Simon will be taking on this exceptionally challenging leadership role for the NHS. He has huge experience, both national and global, and across all sectors, and is admired by his fellow professionals across the world for his commitment to the values of the NHS and to the provision of quality healthcare for all.

“He brings a wealth of ideas and unique experience, building on a distinguished career across the NHS, international healthcare and government. I look forward to working closely with him as we lead innovation, change and significant improvement in safety and quality to patients across all areas of the NHS.

“We have been through a rigorous global search, and engaged with a range of excellent candidates. I am confident that Simon Stevens is the right person to lead NHS England through the coming years, bringing new ideas and fresh energy.”

Simon Stevens said: “The next five years are going to be extremely challenging for the NHS, but compassionate high quality for all is as vital as ever. It will be a privilege to lead NHS England – at a time when the stakes have never been higher – because I believe in the NHS, and because I believe that a broad partnership of patients, carers, staff and the public can together chart a successful future for our Health Service.”