Dental associations speak up over whitening debate

Could this be the call for reclamation on whitening products?

A n on-going investigation by Essex County Council Trading Standards Officers is directly affecting the availability of hydrogen peroxide-based whitening products to dentists triggering many dental associations to speak up and call for government clarification regarding teeth whitening products.

The British Dental BLEaching Society (BDBS) has endorsed such calls, stressing that there is no question around patient safety regarding bleaching when carried out by an appropriately trained and qualified dental healthcare professional.

The British Dental Association (BDA) has already expressed concerns that any supply problem could mean patients seek whitening treatments from non-dental professionals, which is illegal and potentially dangerous.

The European Union is currently reviewing the EU Cosmetics Directive, which is hoped will provide a coherent legal framework for the provision of tooth whitening products in the UK. Meanwhile, the BDBS and the BDA are urging Trading Standards officers to maintain the low-key approach to enforcement around the supply of whitening products to dental professionals previously advised by Local Government Regulation (LACORS).

The BDA would like to see the previous low-key approach to enforcement around the supply of whitening products to dental professionals previously advised by LACORS and taken by trading standards re-instated.

Stuart Johnston, Chair of the BDA’s Representative Body, said: “The recently-changed approach to the supply of whitening products, and particularly the impact the investigation being undertaken in Essex is having, is a significant concern for patient safety. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency and the previously adopted low-key approach to supply to dental professionals reinstated. A significant body of evidence demonstrates the safety of whitening products when used by trained dental professionals. We urge trading standards officers to adopt a pragmatic approach that recognises this and puts patient safety first.”

In a statement from the BDBS, there is no question around patient safety when dentists observe the following guidelines:

• A full examination must take place before any bleaching procedure
• Informed patient consent is paramount and patients must have alternatives and risks thoroughly explained
• Before and after photos must be taken and retained throughout the course, and following completion of treatment
• Any products supplied for home use by a dental practice must meet Scientific Committee on Consumer Products (SCCP) guidelines
• There should be a commitment by the trade not to supply beauticians or the public directly.