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news in brief

number of patients seen by nhs dentists increases

according to a new quarterly report looking into nhs den-
tal activity, almost one mil-
lion more patients were seen in the first quarter of the year than
in the same quarter last year. this is the first time in 20 years that
the number of patients seen has
increased, according to the dentists
committee, which said the increase was due to "better produc-
tion efficiency and innovation".

Dentsply buys Astra Tech

According to a report from Reuters, U.S. company
Dentsply International has
bought AstraZeneca's dental
implants and medical devices
unit for €2.3 billion, secu-
ing itself a foothold in the
developing dental market.

the company said the acquisition
will make it the world's third-
largest dental company, mili-
tion, ranking itself as the
second largest dental com-
pany in the world.

Dentists now have the power to
see patients without a refer-
cal. the report said that dentists
now have the power to see pa-
ients without a refer-
cal, which will make it easier
for them to treat patients
who need dental care.

contamination threat

dental bills create risk for
patients

myth busting

Alum bees discusses the wheel of life

the brace debate

Deborah Lyle discusses the threat of infection

the scape goat

Dave Martin looks at direct access

white at the end of the tunnel

trading standards Essex 'support' in-surgery tooth whitening; cdo an-
nounces regulation amendment proposals to be sent to eu parliament

the confusion surrounding the issue of tooth whitening could be nearing an end as situations both at home and in eu-
rope see major developments.

in a meeting of the british dental bleaching society, dental direc-
tory's sales and marketing
director mike volk read out part of
a letter received from Essex trad-
ing standards by the company over the issue of supplying teeth
bleaching products (Dental Trib-
une Vol 5, No. 15 pg 10):

"As outlined during our conver-
sation on Friday, this service has
no issue with peroxide-based whiten-
ers (0.1%) supplied to GDC reg-
istered dentists for use in the course
of a professional whitening service
conducted by a registrant. It is the
government's policy that such treat-
ments would be regulated by the GDC.

provided your business takes reasonable steps to restrict supplies of such whiteners to registrants,
making it clear that the product is
only for use in surgery (ie not for supply as an over-the-counter take-
home cosmetic product for consum-
er's), then the view of this service is
that there is no need for any trad-
ings standards action.

this service is in agreement
with the view of dental profes-
sionals and organisations such as
the BDA that the safest place for
cosmetic teeth whitening to take place is in the care of registered den-
tal professionals, and it is not in the
public interest for action to be taken

necessary raw materials and whit-
ing agents to make this possible."

In view of this statement, Den-
tal Directory has announced that
it has reinstated the sale of chair-
side whitening kits with immedi-
ate effect. Mr Volk stated: "I would
like to think that as a result of our
campaign, at last common sense
has prevailed and Trading Stand-
ards now recognise and have put
into writing that, in their opinion,
registered dental professionals
are the only professional group
who should offer Tooth Whitening
procedures."

At European level, plans are in
motion to put proposals forward to
amend the regulations surround-
ing tooth whitening in the Euro-
pean parliament.

According to Chief Dental Of-
ficer for England Dr Barry Cock-
croft, there has been a meeting be-
tween the Department of Health,
the Department of Business, In-
novation and Skills (BIS) and the
Medicines and Healthcare prod-
ucts Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
to look at the situation. this has
initiated 'internal procedures' to
write a proposal to amend the reg-
ulations at EU level. according to
Dr Cockcroft, this is 'an opportuni-
ty to sort this situation out properly in Europe.'

The timelines for this are short;
the proposal is due to be pub-
lished in a few weeks before go-
ing to the European Commission for
progression to the European Parliament. Unlike previous un-
successful attempts to change the
law by going through the Cosmet-
ics Directive, this approach is seen
to be more favourable as there is
support in the Commission for
amendments to the regulations.

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