The rapid pace of change in dentistry offers a host of challenges and opportunities for the whole practice team. The 2011 James Hull Clinical conference in June brought together expert speakers who covered both clinical and management topics in a series of parallel sessions running throughout the day.

Dr Simon Hocken of Breathe Business offered his assessment of what he called, the “avalanche of change” in dental practice, pointing to:

- Rules and regulation, compliance, CQC and the threat of Revalidation
- The oversupply of newly qualified, inexperienced dental graduates
- Increased competition
- Significant costs in acquiring complex new skills and equipment
- Fees not rising quickly enough to keep pace

Andrew Hyatt, former president of the British Endodontic Society who voiced some thought-provoking questions about root canal failure and concluded that the main reason is ineffective control of infection, which is much easier to prevent than to treat successfully. He argued that chronic dental infection might be very much more important than has commonly been recognised.

Leading USA implant expert, Dr Rainer Urdaneta, presented his clinical and research experience with Bicon’s short implants, in particular his latest research in crestal bone gain and survival of ultra short locking taper implants.

On the non-clinical side, Alan Cohen, Head of Dental Services, DPL shared his “Ten Top Ways to Reduce Your Risk” which left delegates in no doubt that the single most important factor in risk management is record keeping while Surinder Lall, Head of ICT for James Hull Associates, spoke about significant changes in IT which will benefit practices.

JHA’s longest serving dentist, Anil Shrestha, who has been with the company since 1993, talked about some of the experiences that have helped shape his long and illustrious career, both as a respected academic mentor and tutor and within the corporate environment.

Dr Richard Lee shared the techniques, materials and instrumentation he uses; whether it be diastema closures, composite veneers or that large class IV, and left his audience with some useful tips, hints and tricks to help make placing composite more predictable, more enjoyable and more profitable.

Orthodontic specialist Rebecca Wilson’s presentation was aimed at helping the general dental practitioner, who is usually the first point of contact, to examine children from an orthodontic point of view. Dr Wilson explained how to assess patients at different stages of dental development and outlined some of the interceptive procedures available to deal with most common malocclusions.

Delegates also enjoyed networking at the champagne reception and Gala Dinner held at the Royal Garden Hotel, Kensington, during which awards were presented to Dr Ameed Abdul-Hamid and Saud Bin Majed Al-Duwaish in recognition of their work and support for the Arabic Centre for Oral Health which will open in the autumn at Eastman ICED in London.