Charity starts in your profession – giving is good
Mhari Coxon reviews the BDBS Conference and Dental Wellness Trust Dinner

I was lucky enough to spend a wonderful day at the British Dental Bleaching Society’s Conference at Royal College of Surgeons in July. The conference was very good with some recent research being presented by Dr Bruce Matis, of Indiana University School of Dentistry. He had a unique piece where the studies were in vivo using teeth which would be extracted for orthodontic reasons. He was a very interesting and knowledgeable speaker.

After a wonderful lunch, Dr Linda Greenwall, President of the BDBS, spoke with a practical, approachable animated style, about categorising and costing your whitening cases appropriately. She also discussed microabrasion and how this can work to treat whitespots. It was an incredibly useful talk. She showed cases who have whitened successfully and are still white six or eight years later.

Following on from Linda, Dr Mervyn Drum gave a wonderful and useful talk, showing dental professionals how to calculate the hourly fee required to run the practice and therefore how to cost treatment effectively. Mervyn also shared some wisdom and inspiration with us on how to be happy in practice. He explained that if you like to treat, staff you like to work with, and doing at least one act of kindness in a day which can’t be repaid.

After a short reflective break, James Goolnik, author of Brush, spoke about marketing in practice, sighting his own practice, Bow Lane, in this. James also talked about being an inspiration and role model in the profession.

The day finished with a debate and a strong panel of experts Dr Bruce Matis, Dr Wyman Chan, Dr Mervyn Drum, Dr James Goolnik, Dr John Tiernan and chaired by Dr Linda Greenwall. It was a very good debate looking at the EU directive, what this means for us as a profession and our patients. The general consensus was that power whitening is not necessary and that the 6 per cent rule will be sensible and appropriate. Not everyone agreed with this but it was voiced that this would make it easier to work together to close down illegal whitening practice.

We had drinks in one of the Council Rooms then moved through to the Edward Lumley Hall. The hall was beautiful and the dinner was to raise awareness and funds for the Dental Wellness Trust. The whole day I was conscious of so many of the delegates desire to give back and support charity initiatives. So I thought I would show you what is out there that you could be part of too. It is incredibly rewarding to give some of your time and skills to a project professionally and emotionally.

Dental Wellness Trust
The trust’s overarching mission is to educate and treat the underprivileged in an effort to improve the oral health and wellbeing of people with little or no access to basic oral healthcare.

A gap between the oral health status of children in lower socio-economic groups still exist in the UK. A recent national survey of child dental health states that the probability of having obvious decay experience of the primary teeth was 50 per cent higher in the lowest social group than in the highest social group. Surveys in the UK still highlight the inequalities strongly associated with social background. People living in areas of deprivation and other vulnerable groups in society have poorer oral health and little or no access to dental services.
The trust’s oral health education programme is in line with government policy, which recognises the important role of civil society – to integrate oral health into the wider public health agenda and focus on preventative dentistry, with few interventions.

For more information on how you can contribute or support the trust visit http://dentalwellnesstrust.org/

Heart Your Smile
Celebrating the dental profession and providing you with tools to engage your local community, celebrating your successes and guiding you to deliver a positive dental experience.

The goal of the campaign is to change the public’s perception of Dentistry, increase attendance and reinstates the dental team’s position as trusted members of the local community. We will take this message to the public in a new fun way ONCE we have enough of the profession behind us and we have hit certain key measurements. Using campaigns never seen in Dentistry before, based on humour, powerful visuals and collective effort, we believe we can make a measurable difference. We will be starting from the ground-up, using the dental teams of the future (the students). Our estimate is to launch the public facing campaign 12 months from now but that depends on your help!

For more information and to sign up to the manifesto visit http://www.heartyoursmile.co.uk/

Bridge2Aid
Since 2002 when they started work in Tanzania, Bridge2Aid has worked tirelessly to increase access to pain relief. Focusing on sustainability, and empowering local people to improve their own lives over the long term, they have trained over 160 local health workers in emergency dentistry, and now train more than 50 health workers each year. This training has not only directly treated tens of thousands of people but has also extended access to emergency dentistry services to people living in rural areas. An estimated 1.6m people now live within reach of someone who can help them when they have dental pain.

Bridge2Aid has also established a long term development programme with the disabled and People Affected by Leprosy at Bukumbi Care Centre.

There are many ways you can support Bridge2Aid, for more information visit http://www.bridge2aid.org/32s/index.html

Dental Mavericks
This is a fantastic group of people who have worked to build a programme for children in Morocco over the last three years. They are fund raising to purchase a dental ambulance so they can reach more families out in the harder to reach areas and tribes. The journey has been said to be life altering by many who have volunteered.

For more information on ways to help visit http://www.dentalmavericks.org/

Smiles 4 Heroes
The Smile 4 Heroes Foundation is a team of highly committed dental professionals in the UK that have come together to give their time and expertise to rebuild the smiles and confidence of those Heroes who have been injured in active service in our armed forces.

All the teams involved in the foundation can see the amazing changes they are making to those heroes lives.

For more information and ways to support visit http://www.smile4heroes.co.uk/

I hope that helps so that you can find something you would feel comfortable doing to help others who are not as fortunate as you.

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About the author
Mhari Coxon has 20 years experience in dentistry, working as a nurse, receptionist, oral health advisor and ultimately hygienist in a variety of practice environments. She is passionate about her profession. At present, she works as Senior Professional Relations Manager for Philips Oral Healthcare and clinically as a hygienist in central London. From Chairing the London BSDHT for 3 years, and working as an MD, Mhari excels at motivating and co-ordinating a team and utilising skills, decentralising leadership and developing self-efficacy in members.