Ombudsman: NHS fails to communicate

Six per cent of complaints made against dental practitioners, complaints service details in new report

A new report published by the Health Service Ombudsman shows a significant rise in the number of complaints where the NHS has failed to provide an adequate remedy or proper apology when things have gone wrong.

The report, Listening and Learning, which gives an overview of NHS complaints made to the Ombudsman in 2011/12, includes real-life examples of responses given to people who have complained about the NHS. The Health Service Ombudsman, a free and independent service for anyone who is unhappy with NHS services, is calling on the NHS to improve the way it deals with complaints on the ground.

Ombudsman, Julie Mellor said: “All too often the people who come to us for help are unhappy because of the careless communication, sincere apologies and unclear explanations they’ve received from the NHS. A poor response to a complaint can add to the problems of someone who is unwell, struggling to take care of others or grieving. The NHS needs to get better at listening to patients and their families and responding to their concerns.”

The report shows that complaints about the NHS not acknowledging mistakes in care have increased by 50 per cent. NHS hospital, specialist and teaching trusts received the most complaints, with 45 per cent, while the Healthcare Commission received the least, with just one complaint.

The Ombudsman received 1,057 complaints about general dental practitioners in 2011/12; six per cent of the overall complaints made.

A spokesperson for Dental Protection, either as a contributory factor. The Ombudsman said: “Poor communication is a factor that features in more than 70 per cent of the cases currently handled by Dental Protection, either as the sole cause of a complaint or as a contributory factor. It is for this reason that DPL provides members with an opportunity to attend a series of interactive small-group workshops free of charge.”

Dr John Milne, chair of the BDA’s General Dental Practice Committee, said: “While dentistry has received a relatively small proportion of complaints within the NHS it is important that we are not complacent about patients’ needs and expectations. Good communication between dental practitioners and their patients is essential to ensuring ‘good’ dental and oral health-care outcomes for patients as well as the profession.”

The NHS needs to get better at listening to patients and their families and responding to their concerns’
New dental education centre opens

A new state-of-the-art dental training centre has been opened at Northwick Park Hospital.

The training centre, which is a joint enterprise between London Deanery, and the North West London Hospitals NHS Trust, was opened November by Barry Cockcroft, Chief Dental Officer at the Department of Health.

The training centre has a clinical suite with 15 phantom head units with operating microscopes, and a medical emergencies simulation suite with a computerised manikin to simulate medical emergencies and a debriefing room to assess performance of dental teams. It also has a decontamination suite, enabling teams to train in the latest decontamination requirements.

The Northwick Park DEC will be available for lectures and hands-on training, and also has facilities for producing educational webinars.

Elizabeth Jones, Dean of Postgraduate Dentistry, said: “This is an exciting initiative for North West London and I am delighted it has come to fruition. It will give dentists and dental care professionals a state-of-the-art environment in which to learn new skills and practice what to do in emergency situations, among other things.”

David McVittie, Chief Executive of North West London Hospitals NHS Trust, said: “We are delighted to have worked closely with the London Deanery on this initiative. We are also delighted to be in at the start of a revolution in dental and oral healthcare, particularly in light of the extremely successful maxillofacial service that we have on site here.”

Thames Valley forms Dental Local Professional Network

PCTs within Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire have recently begun testing the outlines proposals for a Local Professional Network (LPN) across dentistry by forming the Thames Valley Dental LPN. The network, which has been formed to ‘improve oral health in the Thames Valley’ is made up of local clinicians, a medical director, commissioning managers and a consultant in dental public health.

Dental LPNs are the future for local professional clinical leadership and will have an important role in informing the decisions which commissioners will make regarding all dental services from April 2013.

The Thames Valley Dental LPN is currently engaging with dental clinicians across the region and is encouraging them to attend a forum on either Tuesday 4th December 2012 or Thursday 17th January 2013 in order to learn about the upcoming changes post April 2013 and to share their opinions.

Please email tvd.lpn@nhs.net for more information or to register your interest.

Implant surgical kit released

The Dr Nilesh Parmar Surgical Kit

Dr Nilesh B. Parmar, BDS (Lond) MSc (ImplDent) Cert.Ortho, has partnered with Hu-Friedy to release his own implant kit for young dentists starting out in implant dentistry.

The DR NILESH PARMAR Implant Surgical Kit includes everything needed to expose, retract, place, augment/graft and suture almost all implant sites. It comes with two surgical instrument cassettes, designed to fit almost all autoclaves and washer disinfectors.

Dr Parmar said: “When I first started placing implants, I was astonished at the sheer variation in surgical instruments available. It took a few years of experience before I knew which instruments I liked and didn’t need.”

A spokesman for Hu-Friedy added: “We have an excellent global reputation for our periodontal and surgical instruments and part of our focus strategy is to target young dentists who are starting out in implant dentistry. We understand that Nilesh is a well-respected, talented clinician, with exceptional attention to detail – a perfect partner for Hu-Friedy.”

For more information, please contact Atif Ramzan (Clinics and Education Manager UK & Ireland) at Hu-Friedy on aramzan@hu-friedy.com or 07880 762079.

Patient and surgeons responsible for implant success

A study recently published in the Journal of Oral Implantology shows that characteristics of both patient and surgeon can affect the success of dental implants. The 10-year study has found that patient risk factors such as grinding teeth or diabetes increase the odds of implant failure, and it also associates higher implant failure rates with surgeons who have less than 5 years of experience.

The study examined failure rates for factors including type of prosthesis, surgeons’ experience level, smoking, diabetes, bruxism, and implant location—maxillary or mandibular. The implant failures in this study appeared to be affected by patient risk factors, such as diabetes, rather than by implant-related factors, such as location and length of implant.

Twenty-nine per cent of patients with a dental history of bruxism in this study experienced implant failure, with more than 28 per cent of patients with diabetes also suffering implant failure.

The number of years and surgeries performed by the oral surgeon also had an impact on the success of the implants, with surgeons who had performed less than 50 implants being twice as likely to fail. An implant was considered successful if no implant loss occurred and bone loss was less than 3mm as assessed by periapical radiograph.
Editorial comment

Come see us at BACD

This week sees the Dental Tribune team living it up in Manchester for the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD) annual conference. This three-day annual event is now in its ninth year and is one of the best events for all things cosmetic.

I love going to conferences like this; the intimacy of the event means you get chance to meet with people and make new connections in an environment that is not as time-pressured as large-scale events. Also the calibre of speaker is always very high and I am really looking forward to continuing my dental degree by osmosis listening to the likes of Basil Mizrahi, Rafi Romano, David Bloom, Bobbi Anthony and DT regular contributor Mhari Coxon.

The Dental Tribune team will be based from the Healthcare-Learning Smile-on stand (Stand 21) so please come along and say hi! In return you can receive a complimentary copy of one our specialist portfolio of journals covering the implant, cosmetic and endodontic sectors.

The gift that keeps on giving

Stuck for Christmas gift ideas? Bridge2Aid are offering gift cards as the perfect present; continuing to give long after Christmas day has been and gone.

Each denomination results in a specific purchase or covering of costs that will benefit people in the Bridge2Aid community:

• £10 buys one head lamp for a Clinical Officer, who often has to work without electricity.
• £15 pays for kerosene, needed to run the pressure cookers employed to sterilise dental equipment.
• £20 provides oral health education packs for six Clinical Officers, used to raise awareness of good oral health in rural communities.
• £35 purchases training materials and resources for six Clinical Officers, for use before, during and after participation in Bridge2Aid’s practical Dental Training Programme.
• £60 pays for an instrument kit, to be donated to a Clinical Officer once training is completed.
• £125 covers the costs of one post-training visit by a Bridge2Aid team member to a District Dental Officer and a Clinical Officer to ensure that they are working in a safe way.

To purchase a gift card or for further information, please email Kerry Dutton at fundraising@bridge2aid.org.

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The origins of our pretty smile? A long dead fish

It takes both teeth and jaws to make a pretty smile, but the evolutionary origins of these parts of our anatomy have only just been discovered, thanks to a particle accelerator and a long dead fish.

All living jawed vertebrates (animals with backbones, such as humans) have teeth, but it has long been thought that the first jawed vertebrates lacked gnosial grasping, instead capturing prey with gruesome scissor-like jaw bones.

However, new research, led by the University of Bristol and published in Nature, shows that these earliest jawed vertebrates possessed teeth too indicating that teeth evolved along with, or soon after, the evolution of jaws.

Palaeontologists from Bristol, the Natural History Museum and Curtin University, Australia collaborated with physicists from Switzerland to study the jaws of a primitive jawed fish called Compagopiscis.

The scientists found that the Aquaporin-1 gene directly into one of their two parotid salivary glands, the largest of the major salivary glands.

The scientists studied five participants who were asked for advice by a dentist with partnership legal? permits certain non-GDC registrants - including a GDS practice employee - to enter a GDS contract. The Dentists Act states that receiving income under a GDS contract is not deemed, for the purposes of that Act, to be carrying on the business of dentistry.

Nick Hancock is a Chartered Accountant and a NASDAL member who was asked for advice by a dentist in partnership with his wife, the practice manager. "I had to inform the dentist that he should dissolve the partnership. Under The Dentists Act 1984 it states: ‘an individual who is not a General Dental Council (GDC) registrant, this being illegal."

Damien Charlton, a member of the NASDAL Lawyers Group says there is an exception. "When the practice holds a General Dental Services (GDS) contract, the National Health Service Act 2006 allows the practice to be carried on by someone not a GDC registrant. The practice is not deemed to be carrying on the business of dentistry."

Dentists in an 'illegal partnership' are strongly advised to dissolve it. Once the partnership has been dissolved, the registered dentist can continue to trade in a different format.
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Patients mass tested after blunder

The Centre for Health Protection has been informed by the University of Hong Kong Health Service’s Dental Unit that it treated hundreds of patients with improperly sterilised instruments last week. More than 254 people, including staff and students, are reported to have received dental treatment under these conditions between 30 October and 2 November.

Meanwhile, the university has issued an apology and called in affected patients for blood tests to rule out infection with bacteria or viruses such as Hepatitis B and C and HIV. In addition, follow-up tests will be conducted six months after the incident, it said.

The kind of dental instruments used for the procedures and the reasons for the negligence were not disclosed; however, university officials said that the possibility of infection is likely to be low since the instruments had passed through some steps of the sterilisation protocol. They have set up a task force to look into the incident and review the unit’s procedures on infection control.

The blunder came to light last Friday after a nurse enrolled in the unit found that instruments were not marked as having completed the full sterilisation protocol.

More than 58,000 treatments are performed annually at the clinic, a university spokesperson told Dental Tribune Asia Pacific.

New dental association launched

Dental Fusion Organisation (DFO), a new association with the mission to support and represent dental professionals working in primary dental care, improve oral health and provide social and clinical training for members, was launched on 9th November.

The association has no governing body as DFO members vote directly on every major issue through Web and postal voting. If the members approve, one of the first campaigns will be to reverse the demise of the small independent family practice.

“In addition to dental health and business success, training and assistance with compliance will be a major theme of the new association”, says Chief Executive Derek Watson, pictured. “This will be delivered mainly through a series of webinars which enable dentists to learn at any web-enabled PC, tablet or smartphone.”

So far 15 lunchtime webinars have been organised, including Management Monday, Financial Friday and a course on improving your IT skills. These are open to all, but DFO members are entitled to priority registration and verifiable CPD.

Anti bullying campaign by ortho practice

Research from the Journal of Orthodontics shows that being bullied is significantly associated with orthodontic treatment need, with 15 per cent of adolescents aged 16-14 examined on a full orthodontic treatment report being bullied.

In light of this, Inline Orthodontics, a specialist orthodontic practice in Stevenage, is conducting an anti-bullying campaign during Anti Bullying Week between 19 and 25 November 2012.

To help coordinate the campaign a meeting was held to discuss ways in which professionals in Stevenage can help young people who are being bullied. Key members of the local community, including local dental professionals, were invited to contribute.

Young people were also asked to contribute to the debate by describing their experiences of bullying whilst their parents will be asked how this affected their children.

Jonathan Alexander-Abt, Principal Orthodontist at Inline Orthodontics commented: “Bullying for whatever reason is deplorable and should never be tolerated. This research shows that a significant number of children are being bullied because of the position and appearance of their teeth. As a Principal Orthodontist I feel that it is important to raise awareness of this and reassure young people that there is something we can do to help them”.

For more information about Inline Orthodontics’ Anti Bullying Campaign visit www.inlineortho.co.uk.
With an ever-increasing number of implant solutions available on the market, finding information about the right treatment option has become difficult, particularly for patients considering such treatment. In order to help non-professionals find answers, the EAO will be presenting a new patient information guidebook and website at its annual scientific congress in Copenhagen.

The 75-page book, to be officially launched during the organisation’s general assembly, aims to provide comprehensive answers to more than 50 questions related to dental implants, such as the general function of these devices, treatment and possible complications like peri-implantitis. It will be published in five languages, including English, French and German, and will be available for purchase to EAO members. The website, which will be an integral part of the EAO’s online platform, will feature additional communication tools and educational materials like videos.

“Throughout the years, the EAO has worked hard to produce work that will improve dental implant treatments,” remarked EAO president Prof. Søren Schou from Denmark. “We are pleased to be able to share our knowledge with patients too.”

EAO reaches out to patients with new implant guidebook

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