OFT campaign gives patients ‘Right to Smile’

Consumer and competition authority initiatives drive to encourage patients to know their rights before visiting their dentist

The Office of Fair Trading has launched a new campaign to help patients understand more about their rights when visiting the dentist.

The ‘Right to Smile’ campaign has come off the back of the report from the OFT earlier in the year, where it was claimed that patients do not always have the information to allow them to make informed decisions about their choice of dentist and treatments.

As part of the campaign the OFT is advising NHS patients:

- They are entitled to a wide range of treatment that is needed to get their mouth, teeth and gums as healthy and pain free as possible.
- If the dentist discusses a particular type of treatment, patients shouldn’t be required to pay for it privately. Private options may be discussed, such as cosmetic alternatives or specialist treatments such as dental implants – which is up to the patient to decide if they want them.
- Even if treatment involves a number of visits, patients will only pay one charge for each complete course of NHS treatment.
- Should NHS treatment fail within 12 months, the dentist should repair or redo most treatment free of charge, unless the patient was advised that treatment was unlikely to be a long-term solution. Advice for private patients includes:
  - Ask what guarantees the dentist provides. To add to any rights patients may have under guarantees, they will also have rights under the Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982.

The ‘Right to Smile’ campaign is supported by organisations such as the BDA, Oasis, IDH, Which?, NHS Choices, the Department of Health, the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and Citizens Advice.

Judith Frame, OFT Head of Campaigns, said: “While the UK has one of the highest standards of oral health in the world, and satisfaction levels among patients are high, our report found that people are often confused about what they’re expected to pay, and don’t always have the information they need.

This campaign aims to help patients be clearer about what to expect, and more engaged when making decisions about their choice of dentist and treatments.”

Barry Cockerott, Chief Dental Officer for England, said: “Giving patients good information is key to a high quality service. We are delighted to support the Office of Fair Trading’s campaign. This material will help patients make informed choices about their dental care.”

Dr Martin Fallowfield, Chair of the BDA’s Principal Executive Committee said: “As the OFT acknowledges, and research by the BDA and other organisations con-

- How to contact the Dental Protection Association
- How to contact the General Dental Council
- How to contact the Dental Protection Association

A Which? spokesperson said: “We support the ‘Right to Smile’ campaign to help consumers understand their rights when visiting the dentist. It’s vital patients are given clear, timely and transparent information on the proposed treatment and the costs and how to complain if something goes wrong.”

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Earthquakes responsible for teeth grinding

The stress of Canterbury’s earthquakes could be damaging people’s teeth, a Christchurch dentist says.

New Zealand Dental Association (NZDA) Canterbury president Donna Batchelor had noticed a growing number of people seeking treatment for teeth grinding, with stress believed to be the cause of the problem.

Some people were seeking treatment for fractured cusps, where the pointed chewing surface of the tooth was broken off from grinding.

“There’s significantly more patients coming through with that,” Batchelor said. “You can’t stop it if it’s something that’s coming from an internal thing.”

Dentists were working more closely with counsellors and family doctors to support stressed patients, she said.

The earthquakes had also seen dental work become less of a priority for some families.

“There’s so many other things to worry about. A lot of people are possibly leaving things more until there’s an issue,” she said.

For elderly people, getting across town to their dentist had become a challenge, and more dentists were now taking the time to go to them, such as visiting rest homes to check on patients with dentures.

Batchelor said the region’s dentists had been stressing since the quakes, with many losing their premises in the February 2011 quake.

Many were still working out of temporary premises or sharing space with other practitioners.

Others were worried about losing the premises they had. A Rangiora dental clinic was forced to move at short notice in March because its building was deemed to be quake-prone, she said.

World-renowned dentistry expert Professor Ray Bertolotti will speak to a group of Canterbury dentists today about alternative treatments.

Bertolotti, a clinical professor of biomaterial science at the University of California, is donating all proceeds, more than $18,000, to the Canterbury NZDA.

Batchelor said the branch would use the money to fund the Great Dental Day Out, an annual continuing education event for Canterbury dentists.

As reported in The Press

齿間磨料制歯医師が警告

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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. Membership is open to all dental professionals and there is also a tight integration between the association and dental suppliers.

Any company can gain direct access to Dental Fusion members by putting goods or services on their Web site free of charge. The association’s margin is recycled back to the members in the form of Reward Points.

“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. “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 fifteen 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.

As you will have seen from the news on the front page (or did you turn straight to this to see what I had to say?) the Office of Fair Trading has backed up its report (first reported in DT Vol.6 No.15, June 4-10, 2012) with patient awareness campaign highlight patient’s rights to treatment at the dentist.

This is being complemented with videos and an information sheet, tailored to each country in the UK. To see the video, go to the OFT’s YouTube channel and take a look – probably worth it as you can bet your patients probably will!

Last week saw the ninth annual BACD conference in Manchester. It was an exceptional conference with some really world class names speaking at the event. I have to say my favourite (and I did go to more than one, I promise) was a lecture by Rafi Romano on Current Innovations in Aesthetic Orthodontics. I am hoping to get a clinical case study from him for an upcoming 2013 issue of Dental Tribune, watch this space!

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Or email: lisa@healthcare-learning.com

Cover story

Protect with the strength of new Colgate® Duraphat® Daily Mouthwash

Proven to improve fluoride uptake at the tooth surface
Recommend the only 500ppm fluoride daily mouthwash
Colgate® Duraphat®

Effects of tooth whitening under inspection by EU

The Council of European Dentists (CED) is currently conducting a one-year survey on possible negative side-effects of tooth whitening and bleaching products. The committee has called upon dentists in the EU to report their own and their patients’ observations.

The survey includes tooth whitening and bleaching products that are not freely available on the market to consumers, that is, those that contain hydrogen peroxide. It runs until 51 October 2015. The initial results will be reported to the European Commission by the end of next year.

The guidance contains a number of key points, including what defines a student/trainee dental nurse or dental technician:

- Employed and enrolled or waiting to start on a recognised programme that will lead to GDC registration;
- Studying on a recognised programme that leads directly to GDC registration.


The research is being carried out in accordance with an agreement between the CED and the European Commission that was signed in March 2010 owing to the increasing availability of tooth whitening products on the EU market. The agreement was signed to ensure appropriate tooth whitening treatment through qualified dental professionals and to improve patient safety.

Dentists can access the survey anonymously and voluntarily online through the website of their national dental association. According to the CED, only a summary of all responses will be published once the survey has been completed.

In the circumstances the Committee determined that the only appropriate and proportionate sanction to maintain the standards of the dental profession and public confidence in it, was that of erasure.

Mr Anyetei’s registration was immediately suspended and unless he exercises his right of appeal, his name will be erased from the register.

About one year ago, the Council of the European Union passed an amended directive on tooth whitening products, which resolved that tooth whitening or bleaching products containing more than 0.1 per cent and up to 6 per cent hydrogen peroxide will only be sold to dentists. Products with concentrations of up to 0.1 per cent continue to be freely available on the market.

The CED is a non-profit organisation, which represents over 340,000 dentists across Europe. It is aimed at the promotion of high standards of oral health care and effective patient-safety-centred professional practice in Europe.

Stevensage dentist struck off

Stevenage dentist based in Stevenage in Hertfordshire has been struck off by the General Dental Council (GDC) following a public hearing into allegations of dishonesty.

The allegations heard by the GDC’s Professional Conduct Committee are in connection with incidents that occurred between January 2009 and October 2010 when Jonathan Anyetei (Registration No. 58109) was practising as sole principal at the Dental Surgery, 15 Town Square Chambers, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1BP.

The Committee found, among other things, that Mr Anyetei had:
- Failed to ensure that appropriate cross infection control standards were adequately complied with – for example, clean and dirty areas in the surgery were not clearly defined.
- Failed to ensure that legal requirements relating to health and safety in the workplace were satisfied – for example The Fire Precautions (Work Place) Regulations 1997.
- Failed to ensure that dental nurse staff working in the practice were adequately protected against Hepatitis.
- Faked his conduct in that respect was dishonest, unprofessional and not in his patients’ best interests.
- Failed to ensure that appropriate cross infection control standards were adequately complied with – for example, clean and dirty areas in the surgery were not clearly defined.
- Failed to ensure that dental nurse staff working in the practice were adequately protected against Hepatitis.

The previous guidance in this area was put in place during the transitional period for dental care professionals – meaning they could register with the GDC without having a formal qualification. This ran from 51 July 2006 to 50 August 2008.

Since then what was meant by the term “in-training” has been reviewed and new guidance has now been agreed.

The Committee said:

“Dishonesty is a serious matter in any person. In the case of a dentist, dishonesty is a betrayal of trust which sits at the heart of the dentist/patient relationship. The public and profession have the right to trust a dentist’s integrity. The public also rightfully expect a dentist to maintain a clean surgery with appropriate measures in place for sterilisation and to prevent cross infection. You placed staff and patients at totally unnecessary risk of serious harm. The Committee noted the seriousness of the charges proved, and was in no doubt that this constituted misconduct.”

GDC sets out new guidance for employers

The guidance contains a number of key points, including what defines a student/trainee dental nurse or dental technician:

- Employed and enrolled or waiting to start on a recognised programme that will lead to GDC registration;
- Studying on a recognised programme that leads directly to GDC registration.


The Committee noted that this constituted misconduct.

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Polar bear enters dentist’s chair

A team of vets at a Scottish wildlife park have given a polar bear root canal treatment.

The vets were called in after the usually-playful Arktos was feeling subdued, leading staff at the park to discover a problem with his upper left canine tooth.

Arktos, who weighs 75 stones, was sedated and placed on an operating table made up of scaffolding poles and thick planks. His tooth had become damaged at the tip and rotted through, causing the polar bear to need root canal treatment.

After three hours, the treatment was successfully completed.

Douglas Richardson, animal collection manager at the park, said the vets and park staff were pleased with how the operation went.

He said: “Arktos really is a lucky bear and we were delighted to be able to save his tooth.

“In the wild the infection would have tracked through his system, causing him a great deal of pain and discomfort and, over the longer term, it could eventually kill him.”

The research is being carried out in accordance with an agreement between the CED and the European Commission that was signed in March 2010 owing to the increasing availability of tooth whitening products on the EU market. The agreement was signed to ensure appropriate tooth whitening treatment through qualified dental professionals and to improve patient safety.
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UPCOMING WEBINARS:

12/12/12  19:30  ‘Demystifying clinical research papers’ Stephen Hancocks

13/12/12  19:30  ‘Modern Treatment Options for Periodontal Disease’ Ian Peace

19/12/12  18:00  ‘Medical Emergencies’ Joe Omar

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Dental practice wins at MyFaceMyBody Awards

Tooth whitening company prosecuted

Businesses pledge for more fruit and veg

Parents responsible for dental fears

More fruit and veg will be added to ready-meals, and supermarket fruit and veg sections will be expanded as part of a new drive to encourage everyone to get their 5-a-day. Public Health Minister Anna Soubry announced today.

The move comes as part of the latest Responsibility Deal pledge, aiming to encourage action across the food industry to help people eat more fruit and vegetables. This includes foods right across the board.

- fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juiced products, as well as fruit and vegetables in prepared food, such as ready-meals.

Eating five portions of fruit and veg a day helps to lower the risk of serious health problems, such as heart disease and some cancers, but figures show that two thirds of people still don’t eat enough.

The new pledges include:

- ALDI will increase the amount of store space dedicated to fresh produce and feature their own branded ‘Super 6’ fruit and vegetable lines in their promotional activities including TV advertising.
- Iceland will offer coupon deals on fruit and vegetables, increase their promotion to its customers using new website and social media features, as well as introduce new fruit and vegetable products.
- LIDL will rebrand its entire fruit and vegetable range.

Concerns were raised that the top four companies for fruit and veg sales, Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury’s and Morrisons, have failed to make any specific pledges, despite having large fruit and veg sections.

Although many other companies did make pledges, there were concerns that many were vague and did not commit to any quantifiable targets.

The employers’ organisation Confederation of British Industry (CBI) recently launched a fruit and veg campaign, but the key focus of this was to encourage employers to offer healthy snacks at work rather than sales growth for fruit and veg sales in supermarkets.

The Food Standards Agency recently launched a campaign for people to eat more vegetables.

Health Minister Anna Soubry said: “Getting your 5-a-day can help lower the risk of serious health problems, such as heart disease and some cancers, but we know that can be a challenge. That is why we want to work with the food industry to help everyone make healthier choices.”

The court has fined the firm £3,500 and ordered them to pay £4,000 towards the GDC costs.

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GDC makes patient information more accessible

The General Dental Council (GDC) has launched more accessible versions of its patient information.

The ‘Smile EasyRead’ patient information leaflet explains the role of the GDC; what patients can expect at their visit to a dental professional; and what they can do if they’re unhappy with their experience.

It features larger font, pictures to support and help explain the text, shorter sentences and language that sounds natural when spoken.

The GDC established a register of Special Care Dentistry specialists in 2008. Special Care Dentistry is concerned with improving the oral health of individuals and groups in society who have a physical, sensory, intellectual, mental, medical, emotional or social impairment or disability or, more often, a combination of these factors.

Sukina Mossajee, the most recent registrant on the GDC’s Special Care Dentistry specialist list and a Locum Consultant in Special Care Dentistry at King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Smile EasyRead” is comprehensive and easy to understand. It will help raise awareness among vulnerable patients and their carers about the standards of care they should be receiving from the dental team.

Alison Keens, Head of Nursing and Therapies - Adults with Learning Disabilities at Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust said: “People with learning disabilities need information to be provided in an accessible format. This excellent document will enable more people with learning disabilities and their families to understand and make more decisions about their own dental care.”

As well as EasyRead, Smile is available in print in Plain English, online in Welsh, Bengali, Chinese, Punjabi and Urdu, and as online audio files in English.

Dentalprofessionals can also access audio and Large Print versions of the GDC’s ‘Standards for dental professionals’, as well as accessible continuing professional development and employment advice.

GDC Chief Executive and Registrar Evlynne Gilvary said: “We are committed to providing accessible information and services. We want all patients to be aware of what they should expect from their dental professional and how we can help if something goes wrong.”

Free copies of Smile and Smile EasyRead, and downloadable translations and audio files can be downloaded from the GDC website: www.gdc-uk.org

Is your dental partnership legal?

NASDAL is advising all dentists to think twice before going into a dental partnership with a family member.

Some smaller practices comprise a partnership between a dentist and their spouse, but if the spouse is not a General Dental Council (GDC) registrant, this may be illegal.

Nick Hancock is a Chartered Accountant and a NASDAL member who was recently asked for advice by a dentist in partnership with his wife who was the practice manager. “Regrettably, 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 registered dentist or a registered medical practitioner shall not carry on the business of dentistry’...”

Damien Charlton, a member of the NASDAL Lawyers Group says there is one exception. “When the practice holds a General Dental Services (GDS) contract, the National Health Service Act 2006 permits certain non-GDC registrants - including a GDS practice employee - to enter a GDS contract. The Dentists Act specifically 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.”

He added: “It’s essential that the partnership formed for the purposes of the GDS contract is kept separate from any private work carried out by the practice because it is only receipt of income under a GDS contract that falls within the exception to the definition of ‘the business of dentistry’. This means (amongst other things) keeping separate sets of accounts and ensuring that the non-GDC registrant does not receive any income from the non-GDS parts of the practice.”

Dentists in an ‘illegal partnership’ are strongly advised to dissolve it. Once the partnership has dissolved, the registered dentist can continue to trade in a different format. This could be as a sole trader, a limited liability partnership or as a limited company. It is essential that you seek expert financial and legal advice to ensure that the structure you choose complies with the complex rules and regulations which govern the practice of dentistry."

Researchers found that as body mass index (BMI) increased with age, so do the number of cavities. These findings were published in the online Journal of Pediatric Health Care article, “Childhood obesity and dental caries in homeless children.”

The study examined the physicals of 157 children, from 2-17 years old, who were homeless. Most were from single-parent families headed by women with one or two children.

While studies in Brazil, New Zealand, Sweden and Mexico have shown a relationship between obesity, dental health and poverty, few US studies have examined how the three factors are linked.

The findings support reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that obesity and poor oral health have doubled since 1980, raising the risk of diabetes and other health problems, as well as issues with self-esteem.

Poverty contributes to poor dental health by limiting access to nutritious food, refrigerators to preserve food and even running water in some homes, said Maguerite DiMarco, associate professor at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University.

“Many people do not realise,” she said, “that dental caries is an infectious disease that can be transmitted from the primary caregiver and siblings to other children.”

Another problem for children of poverty is access to dental care, where families lack the financial means and transportation to make and keep an appointment. And some working poor may not qualify for Ohio’s Childhood Health Insurance Program, which subsidises health and dental care reimbursements to providers.

“There are no easy solutions,” DiMarco said, “especially with the homeless population.”

Children below the poverty line face challenges

Is your dental partnership legal?

BDA Scotland welcomes new director

Pat Kilpatrick has been appointed as the new Director of the British Dental Association (BDA) for Scotland. She will take up her post in January 2015 and brings to the post extensive experience in the healthcare sector including operational and strategic management, policy development, and postgraduate teaching and research.

Graduating from the University of Dundee, Pat joined the Graduate Training Scheme for NHS management before going on to senior roles within NHS Scotland including Director of Clinical Development at NHS Argyll and Clyde and Director of Planning at North Glasgow University Hospitals Trust. She led the National Task Force on the development of Primary Care


As Academic Director in the School of Management at the University of Stirling, she developed the first MBA postgraduate degree programme designed to develop the management skills of both doctors and dentists. Latterly her career has been in consulting. She joined Tribal Consulting in 2006 as a Director within their national advisory team, before going on to launch her own business in 2010.

Pat said: “Dentistry in Scotland faces a complex set of challenges. I look forward to playing my part in helping the profession overcome them and advancing the cause of oral health in Scotland.”

News