Latest thinking in risk management
Shaun Howe reviews this year's Dental Protection Premier Symposium

I

consider myself very lucky to receive an invite to Dental Protection’s Premi-

er Symposium most years. This outstanding event takes place around late No-

vember, early December each year and brings together some of the latest think-

ing in risk management as well as supporting the work of dental professionals in

practice and research by offering the Premier Awards which encourages the improve-

ment of patient care in six key areas: ethics and professionalism, record keeping, in-

fection control, team working and skill mix, consent and communication and health

and safety.

The line-up is invariably impressive and this year again provided great education, rea-

sons why we should reflect and consider ourselves. It’s not as simple as that; he high-

lighted how that by applying set standards regardless of location that the patient journey is im-

proved as well as the outcomes. This is however compounded by the lack of available fund-

ing due to these constrained times we are experiencing. Informative, clever and witty and he was quite kind to his predominately English au-

dience.

Professor Trevor Burke gave a presentation titled “Fools rush in...” the main thrust of his dis-

cussion was regarding the evidence base that we should use to offer the very best use of ma-

terials when treating patients. The professor offered some in-

sight into the evolution of com-

posite materials yet examined the weak evidence base that is sometimes used to support the use of various materials as well as the longevity of restora-

tions. He cleverly used several blank slides during his presen-

tation to demonstrate the lack of evidence for certain materi-

als, this man is so engaging and as the talk progressed he used numerous versions of the song “fools rush in” to highlight as-

pects of his presentation.

A tough act to follow but Dr Lloyd Searson of Kings College certainly rose to the occasion with his presentation “...where angels fear to tread” where he discussed how poor planning of implants, their placement and selection criteria, can lead to future problems and he stated “poor planning today will lead to problems tomorrow”. A re-

ally interesting lecture that ex-

amined the evidence around why implants fail and also discussed the pitfalls for prac-

titioners placing implants in the aesthetic zone which can produce its own set of com-

plex issues. This was all com-

bined with an examination of the levels of training that some feel adequate to place implants against perhaps more conven-

tional accepted standards.

“When good enough” was just not good enough was presented by Dr Jason Leitch who is the Clinical Director of the Quality Unit in the Health and Social Care Directorate NHS Scotland. I have met this enigmatic gentleman on a few occasions and it is always a pleasure to hear him talk. He realised that the inequalities of healthcare standards in his na-

tive Scotland were outrageous-

ly twisted as parts of Glasgow would have a very low life ex-

pectancy compared to other more affluent areas where there may be as much as a 15 years difference. But it was/is not as simple as that; he high-

lighted what the lack of available fund-

ings due to these constrained times we are experiencing. Informative, clever and witty and he was quite kind to his predominately English au-

dience.

The Premier Awards pre-

ceded lunch and were awarded as follows:

Under-graduate:

2nd prize: Myles Chen and Huong Ho (Otago NZ) for a study of effective infection con-


trol in 5th year dental students.

1st prize: Junaid Nayaar and Mervyn Hustin (Dublin) for producing an audit checklist for panoramic radiography to reduce unnecessary exposures.

DCPs:

2nd prize: Keri Fish (Dental Nurse Warwick University) for work on extending the role of the Dental Nurse in orthodon-

tic practice; auditing and assur-

ing quality of impressions and clinical photographs.

1st prize: Alison Lowe (dental hygienist Cardiff) for a litera-

ture review of the workplace prevalence of musco-skeletal disorders amongst dental hy-

gienists. (Alison is a second time winner of this award so a special congratulations to her)

Post-graduate:

2nd prize: Douglas Lovelock for his rewrite of Chapter 12 of Master Dentistry Volume 5.

1st prize: Maha Meher for her work on an audit of record keeping regarding acute ad-

missions to Oral Maxillo-facial department.

Congratulations to all win-

ners, runners up and those who submitted work.

After a hearty lunch Dr Ger-

ald Hickson MD presented a lecture titled “Treat me nice, treat me good (treat me like you really should)” which focu-

sed on what patients can and should expect from those delivering healthcare. From Tennessee, USA, this delight-

ful man entertained and in-

formed on what leads to many cases of litigation in the USA. Communication is a vital tool in any healthcare workers job yet it seems that many of those who have numerous law suits against them lack effec-

tive communication skills; by implementing peer based as-

sistance for his colleagues, he has helped reduce litigation brought against those who work for the organisation he is involved with and how the pa-

tient journey is also improved.

To finish the day we were treated to some new core CPD by Professor Mark McGurk who examined “Medical Risks in a complex world”. The first part concentrated on look-

ing at and identifying lesions in and around the oral cavity and he also demonstrated that our inability to receive and full social and medical history from our patients is letting us and patients down. The simple act of ticking boxes has taken us away from really “drilling down” with our patients to ex-

amine those risk factors that we should really be paying at-

ten to especially when our patients have a history of smok-

ing and diabetes and very complex medical histories. He also highlighted the very new risks presented to us by new medical therapies that we as practitioners may not be paying enough attention too.

A thoroughly entertain-

ing day which any team could have attended; you should perhaps consider it next year and I hope I get invited again.

About the author

Shaun trained and qualified in the Royal Army Dental Corps in 1993. He works in the NHS and privately full time in Derbys-

hire. He sat on the GDC Fitness to Practice Panel from 2005-2008 at which time he became one of the DCP Local Advisers in Dental Pro-

tection Ltd; he is also a Key Opinion Leader for Philips Sonicare and is currently training in Mentorship to become part of their Transitional Sup-

port programme. Shaun has a keen interest in Clinical Governance and is an FGDP trained practice appraiser. He currently sits on the Editorial Board of DDR&T and Dental Tribune and con-

tributes to these ollins. He has spoken widely to groups all across the UK drawing on his experiences on FGDP and his work with Dental Protection.