Free toothpaste for families, experts say

Dental health experts are calling for radical plans to be implemented to halt rising rates of child tooth decay. Dr Gill Davies and Dr Colette Bridgman, dental public health specialists who work for Manchester’s NHS primary care trust, want a new approach to tackle the growing number of children, some as young as three, who have to undergo painful extractions.

Writing in the British Dental Journal, they demanded that parents play the key role in getting their offspring into good dental habits. There are many well-trodden schemes being introduced today, but the authors want other steps taken, such as:

• Children using family fluoride toothpaste, not children’s toothpaste, which is low in fluoride
• Schools and nurseries to stop giving children fruit squash at snack times
• Every schoolchild to have fluoride varnish painted on their teeth at least twice a year. Currently less than 15 per cent do so
• “Meet the dentist” sessions at primary schools
• An end to the practice of sharing birthday cakes at schools

Their recommendations draw on the success of the Manchester Smiles dental health campaign which began last year. Under it, 6,000 pupils at 80 primary schools have supervised brushing sessions twice daily and dental practices are “buddied” with schools. Under a different scheme, 200,000 families in Manchester have received free toothpaste and toothbrushes since 1999, a plan that Davies and Bridgman believe should be extended nationally.

The Department of Health said: “The government has wasted no time in setting its plans to improve dental services. At their heart is improving preventative care for children. They need a service that helps them maintain good oral health and prevent decay, rather than one that is based solely on treatment.”

Dentist removed after diagnosis concerns

The chairman of the Assembly’s health committee has said Health Minister Michael McGimpsey will face “difficult questions” after the removal of a senior dental consultant from his job at Belfast’s Royal School of Dentistry.

After a review of senior dental consultant Professor Philip Lamey’s work, the Belfast Trust has recalled 117 people as a “precautionary measure” following concern about the late diagnosis of cancer found in some patients.

Four patients have since died; however the Belfast Trust will not confirm whether a late cancer diagnosis may have contributed to their deaths.

Health Minister Michael McGimpsey is due to meet with the chair of the health committee, Jim Wells, to face “difficult questions,” he said.

Dr Lamey is due before a hearing of the General Dental Council in London on 9 July. One of the patients recalled by the trust told BBC reporters how the situation was affecting him. Reports said that the patient, who remains anonymous, said it was “very worrying”.

“Until Monday morning when I go to my appointment and the follow-up, I’ll not know for sure. This condition hasn’t gone away, it’s very upsetting not only for me but for my family,” reports stated him saying.

According to reports, Trust Medical Director Dr Tony Stevens said problems with the care administered by the dentist came to light in late 2009; however he was not removed from his post until the end of last year. Even though he is no longer treating patients he is still employed by the trust. Dr Stevens said anyone who needs to be contacted has already been sent a letter.

The trust is also providing a helpline, which received between 40 and 50 calls at the weekend. The telephone number is 028 9063 6330.

Training centre opens at Portsmouth University

A new £9 million purpose-designed facility to train dental care professionals and final-year undergraduate dentists was officially opened by Health Minister, Earl Howe at the University of Portsmouth’s Dental Academy.

Supervised by tutors, dental students will work with hygiene therapists and dental nurses, as they would in practice and provide free treatment for 2,000 local people every year.

The new centre has 20 additional dental chairs, radiography facilities, a state-of-the-art instrument decontamination centre as well as seminar rooms.

Each year, 80 final year students from King’s College London Dental Institute will be trained alongside dental nursing students from Portsmouth.

Development of the new building has been enabled by capital funding support from the Department of Health, the local NHS and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

Earl Howe, who is the Minister with lead responsibility for Dentistry, said: “I was delighted to see the high quality hands-on training provided at Portsmouth Dental Academy today.”

“As set out in the NHS White Paper, we are committed to improving oral health for adults and children as well as increasing access to NHS dental services across the country. The University of Portsmouth Dental Academy has an important role to play in delivering on this agenda. They are providing first-class training and education for our future dentists and dental care professionals and excellent services to patients in the area.”

Director of the Dental Academy, Sara Holmes MBE, said: “Today marks the culmination of over two years of planning and represents a unique partnership between the University and the NHS. The entire staff and student body are thrilled to be working and studying, alongside colleagues from Kings, in such a dynamic and progressive institution right the heart of Portsmouth.”

Nairn Wilson, Dean and head of KCLDI, said: “King’s College London Dental Institute is delighted to have joined forces with the University of Portsmouth to create the Dental Academy, with a focus on innovation in the education of the dental team and the student experience. The event was attended by over a hundred members of the local dental community, representatives from the local NHS and from KCLDI who was joined by University Chancellor, actor Sheila Hancock.”
Editorial comment

Here at Dental Tribune UK we are committed to providing our readers with insightful articles, practical help from specialists in their fields, and a mix of news and opinion that helps to keep all members of the dental team up to date.

As part of this commitment we have been looking to see how we can provide more to UK dental professionals with regards to specialised material related to a particular interest.

Now, to the point – in March we are bringing to the UK three titles of international renown tailored to the UK dental profession: roots, implants, and cosmetic dentistry. Although the international versions are published by our colleagues at Dental Tribune International, the UK versions will be published by the same team that brings you Dental Tribune UK. The three titles cover the following issues:

- **cosmetic dentistry**: covering the most significant developments in the world of cosmetic and restorative dentistry
- **implants**: delivering the latest thinking in implant therapy
- **roots**: presenting up to date information in the field of endodontics

These quarterly titles, presented in a glossy, high quality format, will deliver specialist articles from both international and UK clinicians focusing on a wide range of issues surrounding each particular topic. We do not want these magazines to be all things to all readers. We want highly focused titles related to your interests.

To celebrate the launch of roots, implants, and cosmetic dentistry, we are currently making these titles available at special prices for a year’s subscription.

Call my colleague Joe Aspis on 02074008969 or email him joe@dentaltribuneuk.com to get the latest.

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BDA calls for piloting overdue NI contracts

The price of dental tourism

Throughout the UK, Europe and America, people are heading abroad to receive dental care, having been lured by the cheap prices of dental treatments and cosmetic dentistry. Dental tourism is rapidly becoming a very attractive option for those people who need cosmetic dentistry procedures, restorative dentistry procedures, and treatment for broken teeth. However, the current trend is giving patients more problems than it is solving and there are more and more high profile cases of treatments going wrong overseas.

Thousands of Britons travel abroad every year for cheap dental work and many issues can begin as soon the patients return home. Once Sherree was back in the UK she visited her dentist, who upon inspection found that her jaw was broken. They also found that two veneers were also cracked.

Commenting on the issue, a spokesman for Dental Protection said: “Prevention is better than cure. Patients travelling abroad for dental treatment should enquire what arrangements are in place and what costs might be involved if the treatment is unsatisfactory. Patients should also ensure that the dentist providing the treatment is properly indemnified against claims in negligence, and that the dentist and patient can communicate effectively when seeking and giving consent for treatment.”

With regards to where the blame would lie if the treatment fails in spite of additional work carried out by a UK dentist, the spokesman added: “It is standard practice for dentists to examine all new and existing patients carefully, particularly noting any changes that might have occurred since the patient was last examined. It is important that any concerns are carried out in another practice (or indeed another country) that a new baseline chart is documented. It is also critical that any concerns identified are described to the patient, without bias and in a factual way, noting the conversation in the records and any specific issues that the patient wanted to discuss.”

“These records are very important if concerns are later raised by the patient in the light of any remedial treatment undertaken in the UK or with regard to the original work done outside the UK. All the pieces of evidence needed are invaluable sources of evidence.”

“Nonetheless, Northern Ireland Dental Practice Committee endorses the proposed scheme and looks forward to continuing constructive and meaningful engagement as pilots progress. It is important that these pilots are given the time and resources they need so that their effects can be properly understood and a better future delivered for health service dentistry in Northern Ireland.”

AOG and Smile-On, in conjunction with the Dental Directory and the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK), will again be hosting the 2011 Clinical Innovations Conference (CIC). Now in its eighth year, the CIC promises to be bigger and better than ever, with a wealth of top speakers, including the AOG’s President, Pomi Datta, who said: “Last year’s conference and the opportunity of attending the proposed arrangements for dentistry and press for progress. The BDA response also stresses the importance of pilots being allowed to produce a clear picture of both positive and negative implications of the new arrangements against a difficult financial position, and emphasises the need to understand the effect of elements of the contract including payments for patient care, communities and items of service. BDA also welcomes the Health and Social Care Board’s acknowledgment that it will be important to pilot revised patient charges prior to the implementation of the definitive new contracts.

Whilst the BDA response also signals its agreement with the proposal to have separate contracts for primary dental care, orthodontics and oral surgery, it highlights that changes in one area of dentistry will impact on another. The ability of practitioners with enhanced training and skills to deliver treatments that might otherwise be unavailable to patients in certain areas is particularly important, the BDA argues.

Peter Crooks, Chair of the BDA’s Northern Ireland Dental Practice Committee, said: “It’s nearly five years since reform was louted. Progress is well overdue. These pilots will take place against a backdrop of financial pressures and will need to take account of the difficult circumstances facing practitioners. “Nonetheless, Northern Ireland Dental Practice Committee endorses the proposed scheme and looks forward to continuing constructive and meaningful engagement as pilots progress. It is important that these pilots are given the time and resources they need so that their effects can be properly understood and a better future delivered for health service dentistry in Northern Ireland.”
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BDTA surveys raise B2A cash

The British Dental Trade Association (BDTA) is pleased to announce the donation of nearly £1,000 to Bridge2Aid following the submission of completed membership questionnaires and technology surveys sent out last year.

In order to assess how well the Association is meeting the needs of its members, questionnaires were sent to each member company, and the BDTA offered to donate £5 to the Bridge2Aid charity for every questionnaire returned. 47 member surveys were filled in and submitted which represented an exceptionally high response rate.

The BDTA also conducted research amongst dentists to investigate their attitudes towards new technologies and training courses. Again, an excellent response rate was received and £2,500 was donated to Bridge2Aid for each of the 285 surveys completed and returned.

Executive Director of the BDTA, Tony Reed, stated: “It is important for us to understand the needs of our members in order to continue to serve them effectively and introduce new benefits. It is vital for our members to understand how members of the dental team respond to new technologies and the mix of training preferred. We were extremely pleased with the response achieved from the questionnaires and to be able to donate funds to Bridge2Aid made the research worthwhile on a number of levels. Thank you to all those who participated.”

Mark Topley, Chief Executive of Bridge2Aid, commented: “The BDTA has been a great support to us over the past six years and helped us to achieve so much – restoring tens of thousands of smiles and changing many lives in Tanzania. This donation will go a long way to helping us relieve the pain of thousands more people in the coming year and extend our work to new areas desperate for basic dental services and training. Our thanks go to the BDTA for thinking of us in this way, and to all the members of the dental industry for completing their questionnaires.”

For further information on the BDTA visit www.bdtा.org.uk

Osseointegrated Implantology Courses

If you are interested in implantology then the Osseointegrated Implantology Courses, which are being held on Sunday 27th March - Friday 1st April 2011 could be the right choice.

Delivering 36 hours of CPD accreditation, the fee for the course is £2,200 and is ideal for delegates who wish to participate in a course over six consecutive days.

Topics covered include:

- examination and treatment planning • dealing with the patient within the practice • anatomy, physiology • biomaterials • sterility • surgical templates • surgical techniques (to include bone augmentation and advanced surgical techniques) • implant impression techniques • jaw registration • articulation • periodontal consideration (to include maintenance protocol and guided tissue regeneration) • connecting teeth to implants • detailed literature review.

There will be guest speakers on the following subjects:

- Dr Joe Omar on “Medical Emergencies”
- Dr Alan Cohen on “Medico- Legal Aspects”
- Mr Sean Goldner on “CT Scanning”
- Mr Keith Rowe on “Laboratory Techniques”

There will also be hands-on session on the surgical, prosthetic and laboratory phases and delegates will attend a CT scan appointment with one of the patients on the course.

This course is suitable for the application of all different osseointegrated implant systems and delegates who complete the course are eligible for the ICOI Fellowship, without further examination.

For more details or to book your place please call 020 7584 9833 / 020 7584 7740 or email reception@walpolestreetdental.co.uk.

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V+B scheme ‘to be scrapped’

According to reports, the government is preparing to announce that a scheme for vetting people who work with children is to be scrapped.

Set up by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), the original Vetting and Barring Scheme system was designed to prevent unsuitable people working with children and vulnerable adults, with employers facing prosecution for breaches. Approximately nine million adults who came into contact with children once a week or more had been subject to checks.

Home Secretary Theresa May suspended it last June so a review could be held. A Home Office spokesman said an official announcement - which affects England, Wales and Northern Ireland - would be made shortly.

It has also been reported that the government will also announce that criminal record checks are to be sent to individuals first to allow them to challenge any mistakes.