Students kick the habit

In the first known scheme of its kind in London, student volunteers from Thames Valley University (TVU) in West London have qualified as Smoking Cessation Advisors to help fellow students in Ealing, quit the habit.

Ealing Stop Smoking Service has trained 11 Psychology students at TVU to a professional standard so that they can help their peers quit smoking through a free personalised six week programme.

TVU and Ealing Stop Smoking Service found that students could save £1,000 a year if they stopped smoking ten cigarettes a day, which is equivalent to almost a third of a basic student loan. Research has shown that 65 per cent of smokers in Great Britain want to give up smoking and 22 per cent of people in London smoke, which is the second highest rate in the country*.

* Figures from General Household Survey 2009

To this end, the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) is delighted to announce the theme for this year’s National Smile Month, the ‘Smile Factor’, running from 15 May – 15 June. The aim of the campaign is to put the smile back on peoples’ faces and help them display their full personalities through the ‘Smile Factor’ theme.

Now into its 53rd year, National Smile Month remains an integral part of the Foundation’s work in promoting greater oral health. As in previous years, the Foundation will also be raising the awareness of a healthy diet and the link between good oral health and good overall body health and promoting the three key messages of brush for two minutes twice a day using a fluoride toothpaste, visit the dentist regularly, as often as they recommend and cut down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks.

Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, described the thinking behind this year’s campaign, Dr Carter said: “A smile can be a very powerful show of emotion, yet not everyone has the confidence to do so. They say you can hide behind a smile if you are not happy or are self-conscious about your teeth, so many people are missing out on showing their very own ‘Smile Factor’. Others are being held back by poor oral well-being and its impact on their general health. This year’s campaign is designed to challenge these perceptions and get you smiling again.”

Every year the Foundation encourages local communities, practices and individuals up and down the country to take part and get involved in National Smile Month, and as ever, there will be a wide range of different ways in which people can do just that. There will be many family and community events throughout the campaign – all of which need your support.

Students have been keen to find out more about National Smile Month, wish to take part in an event or organise one, all campaign material is now available. Please call the Foundation’s PR Department on 01788 559792 to request a copy.

Wanted: NEBDN exam panel members

The National Examining Board for Dental Nurses (NEBDN) is seeking to recruit new members to its Panel of Examiners in order to deliver a new assessment of the National Certificate in Dental Nursing qualification in 2011.

NEBDN has completely revised the format of the qualification in order to provide a more even approach to the assessment of dental nurses.

To become an Examiner with NEBDN you must:
• Have previous experience of assessing OSCEs within dental training
• Be registered with the General Dental Council
• Be currently practicing as a dental surgeon or dental care professional
• Have two years’ experience since qualification
• Be well organised and able to maintain high quality standards
• Be passionate about Dental Nurse Education and helping people reach their full potential

Becoming an Examiner will help you to:
• Improve your personal development and professional status
• Develop your skills and understanding of Dental Nurse Education and training
• Gain verifiable CPD through ongoing support and training

For further information and an application pack please visit our website www.nebdn.org or contact sarah@nebdn.org Full training and support will be provided. Successful applicants will be invited to an assessment day in May 2011.
Dental archive bequeathed by estate

A request from former BDA president, John Walton M-Lean OBE, to be used to fund work on an archive documenting the history of dentistry since the start of the National Health Service. Being developed in conjunction with King’s College London Dental Institute’s (KCLDI’s) Unit for the History of Dentistry, the recently launched John McLean Archive: A Living History of Dentistry, will fill a void in the dental profession’s recorded history.

Members of the McLean family presented the BDA Trust Fund with a cheque in support of dental research, which will be used to fund the archive, at a reception held at BDA headquarters in London. The reception was attended by trustees of the Fund, representatives of KCLDI and the BDA, and members of the project’s team, including Professor Stanley Gellhorn and Dr Steve Simmons from KCLDI’s Unit for the History of Dentistry, and BDA museum staff members Rachel Raitsto, Melanie Parker and Sophie Riches.

Head of BDA Museum Services, Rachel Raitsto said: “In time, this archive will provide an essential record of the significant evolution of the dental profession from 1948 onwards. This will be invaluable for generations of professionals to come. We are honoured to be given the opportunity to realise this project through the generosity of one of the most highly-regarded leaders in the profession, John McLean, whose legacy will long be remembered.”

The project will comprise a series of witness seminars and individual oral history interviews, encompassing the full breadth of dentistry in the UK.

Wesleyan warns dentists of under insurance risk

Wesleyan has launched a new service for its dental clients to help ensure that they have the correct level of home insurance cover. Wesleyan’s Private Clients Insurance service now includes a free ‘walk-through’ home valuation for dentists after new statistics show that up to 70 per cent of professionals have inadequately covered levels.

According to the Bermuda-ham-based mutual, a leading provider of tailored financial advice and products to the dental profession, the majority of dentists fail to appreciate the value of their home contents and sometimes forget to re-assess cover levels to include valuable new purchases.

Wesleyan believes that its insurance service is the first in the UK to offer personal valuations for free to dentists regardless of the level of sums insured.*

Mark Lee, Business Development Manager for Wesleyan’s Private Clients Insurance, said: “Our dental customers are time poor and don’t always have the time to review their insurance cover. As a result they are often underinsured and leave themselves exposed if something should happen to their home. This service takes away the hassle of calculating contents cover by leaving it to an independent valuation professional who will visit at a time that suits the client.

“Private Clients Insurance is designed specifically with our customers in mind. For example, they can delegate authority for dealing with their policy to another person so they don’t have to handle any of the administration involved. Private Clients Insurance customers also get a dedicated personal client manager who looks after their needs.”

The new valuation service has been launched following the successful first year for Wesleyan’s Private Clients Insurance, which has seen an eight-fold increase in demand since re-launching in 2010. **

* Statistics provided by Wesleyan’s valuations partner Lyon & Turnbull
** Terms and conditions apply

Dental charges rise

Just days after it was revealed that dental charges will be frozen in Wales and prescription charges will be scrapped in Scotland Ministers have confirmed that prescription fees and dental charges will increase in England.

The announcement has unsurprisingly been greeted with anger prompting people to question the equality of a different fee scale for different parts of the UK.

Ministers have confirmed that dental charges will increase by the following: band 1 treatments will go up to £17, band 2 treatments will increase to £47 and band 5 treatments will be raised to £204.

Along with this rise in dental fees prescription charges will also increase by 20p to £7.40 per item from the 1st April.

Dental charges in England are the highest in the UK and now England remains the only country in the UK where prescriptions aren’t free.

The British Medical Association has criticised the price increase, claiming that the increase amounts to a tax on the sick. Sue Sharpe, from the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, also condemned the news, saying that people from low income families may struggle to get the medication they need.

Katherine Murphy, Chief Executive Patients Association said: “At a time when many patients are struggling to make ends meet, another increase on charges they must pay is not acceptable.

“It is essential all patients feel they can access healthcare when they need it and not be deterred by costs.”

A spokeswoman from the Department of Health said that the government was investing an additional 10.7 billion pounds in the NHS and claimed that abolishing prescription charges in England would leave a shortfall in NHS funding of 450 million pounds per year.

Fellowship for Dental Dean

Prof Elizabeth Kay, Dean of the Peninsula Dental School, has been awarded Fellowship Ad Eundem of the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) (FGDP(UK)) at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. She received her award at the Annual Faculty of GDPs (UK) Diplomates Ceremony in London.

The award of Fellowship is the highest accolade a member of the FGDP(UK) can achieve. It is a mark of achievement for those who have made a contribution to patient care or the profession of primary dental care, significantly over and above what might be reasonably expected of a member of the FGDP(UK).

Russ Ladwa, Dean of the FGDP(UK), commented: “It is obvious to all to see that Professor Kay has an exceptional enthusiasm for her profession, and a willingness to help others along their chosen path. Her tireless work and support for dental practitioners to provide an improved quality of care for their patients is well known and I thank Prof Kay for that.”

Prof Elizabeth Kay

Prof Kay added: “I am of course delighted to have been awarded such a prestigious accolade. While it is me who has been made a Fellow, it is an achievement that reflects the hard work and dedication of my colleagues and our students at the Peninsula Dental School, as much as it does me personally.”

Gone with the wind

A t 2am, the dentist who repeatedly broke wind and belched in front of patients and staff had been struck off.

With a string of allegations to his name, Walton was reported to have made derogatory comments about certain patients’ unemployment, disabilities, age and ethnic origin.

Other charges included Walton being routinely rude, abusive and sarcastic; not allowing dental nurses to communicate with patients; not allowing his dental nurse sufficient time to clean the clinical area in surgery between patients and routinely not warning his dental nurse that he was about to take x-rays of patients when she was in the room.

Walton, worked at the practice in Whitchurch, Shropshire, between August 2006 and December 2008.

The committee in London told Walton it had taken into account his “lack of insight and lack of remediation”.

News
A retainer and a whole lot of bacteria

Researchers at the UCL Eastman Dental Institute have found that insufficient cleaning could allow a build-up of microbes on orthodontic retainers.

Dr Jonathan Pratten and colleagues looked at the types of microbes which live on retainers and found that potentially pathogenic microbes were growing on at least 50 per cent of the retainers that were conducted ion the study.

The results of the study, which was published in the Society for Applied Microbiology's journal Letters in Applied Microbiology, has indicated that there is possibly a need for the development of improved cleaning products for orthodontic retainers.

According to reports, Dr Pratten and his team took samples from the mouths of people without retainers and those wearing either of the two most widely used types of retainers and searched for microbes which are not normally found in the oral cavity.

The researchers were particularly interested in two species of microbes; Candida, a type of yeast, and Staphylococcus, including MRSA. The results of the study showed that species of these microorganisms were present on 66.7 per cent and 50 per cent of retainers respectively, regardless of the retainer type. Reports stated that these microbes were also present on the interior cheeks and tongue of retainer wearers.

Living in communities, otherwise known as biofilms, the bacteria can be very difficult to remove, and although they pose no real threat to healthy individuals, both Candida and Staphylococcus can be potentially dangerous to people with a low immune system.

The researchers are now looking at developing effective methods of cleaning retainers; however, for the meantime it is hygiene that is the key to reduce the bacteria.

A female consultant has become the first woman to be given the job of Vice President of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.

The institution was established more than 400 years ago in 1599 and a woman has never been given the position, until now. Dr Alyson Wray, a consultant in paediatric dentistry at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow, has been awarded the prestigious title.

Dr Wray said that the appointment was a “huge thing” for the organisation; she said that she has spent many years being the only woman in the room at conferences and meetings, but claimed that in recent years, things have started to change and women are being given more opportunities.

Consultant appointed Vice President RCPSG
New plans to stub out smoking

New Ftp panel members

Fake drugs arrest

Wedding day?