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 Smokin’ 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*.

Clinics, located at St Mary’s Road in Ealing, run on Monday afternoons, Tuesday evenings and Friday lunchtimes so that full-time and part-time students are able to attend them. Student Advisors offer confidential advice and free recommendations on everything from stop smoking medication to nicotine replacement therapy.

Pauline Fox, Health Psychologist and Principal Psychology Lecturer at Thames Valley University, said: ‘The University is very proud to be working with Ealing Stop Smoking Service to give students the support they need to quit smoking so they don’t need to ‘go it alone’. Students are four times more likely to stop smoking if they use our service and as Student Advisors can recommend stop smoking medication at prescription rates, they can do it on a tight budget.’

Rachael Davis, Stop Smoking Facilitator at Ealing Stop Smoking Service said: ‘We are delighted to have trained Thames Valley University’s hardworking and enthusiastic students as Stop Smoking Advisors. Peer support is really effective in changing behaviour, especially amongst students; this was the catalyst for the project. We are very proud to be working in partnership with Thames Valley University on this project which puts student wellbeing at the heart of the education service that it provides.’

TVU student Caroline Lefarge has been trained by Ealing Stop Smoking Service as an a Stop Smoking Advisor and said: ‘As a student myself I understand how stressful exams can be and what it is like being away from home for the first time so to quit smoking can be a big challenge. The training I received from Ealing Stop Smoking Service and the support from TVU has been excellent and I am thrilled to be involved in this exciting project. When a student comes to see me and wants to give up smoking I ask them about their smoking behaviour history, I take a carbon monoxide reading from a detector and set a quit date.’

If you’d like 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 539792 to request a copy.

* Figures from General Household Survey 2009

‘Smile Factor’ for NSM

The 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 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.

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 those 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.

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.

Featuring Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), NEBDN has completely revised the format of the qualification in order to provide a more modern 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
• Network with other professionals with a commitment to improving Dental Nurse Education

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 bequest from former BDA president, John Walker-M-Lean OBE, is 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) 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 Gollner and Dr Steve Simmons from KCLDI’s Unit for the History of Dentistry, and BDA museum staff members Rachel Bairisto, Melanie Parker and Sophie Riches.

Head of BDA Museum Services, Rachel Bairisto 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 inadequate cover levels.

According to the Birmingham-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 Private Client Insurance customers.

** 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.

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.”

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.”

Fellowship for Dental Dean

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.”

Wesleyan warns dentists of under insurance risk

Dental charges rise

Fellowship for Dental Dean

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.”

Wesleyan warns dentists of under insurance risk

Dental charges rise

Fellowship for Dental Dean

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.”

Wesleyan warns dentists of under insurance risk

Dental charges rise

Fellowship for Dental Dean

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.”
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 mouth 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.
New plans to stub out smoking

N ew ambitions to tackle the substantial public health harms from tobacco were announced on No Smoking Day by Health Secretary Andrew Lansley.

The Government has published Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A Tobacco Control Plan for England which sets out how tobacco control will be delivered over the next five years.

Local communities will take a leading role in reducing smoking rates. The plan confirms action to end eye catching tobacco displays in shops which encourage young people to start smoking.

Andrew Lansley said: “Smoking is undeniably one of the biggest and most stubborn challenges in public health. Over eight million people in England still smoke and it causes more than 80,000 deaths each year.

“Smoking affects the health of smokers and their families. My ambition is to reduce smoking rates faster over the next five years than has been achieved in the past five years.

“We want to do everything we can to help people to choose to stop smoking and encourage young people not to start smoking in the first place. We will help local communities to take a comprehensive approach to reducing smoking so we can change social attitudes to smoking.”

The Tobacco Control Plan has three national ambitions to reduce smoking rates in England by the end of 2015:

• From 21.2 per cent to 18.5 per cent or less among adults
• From 15 per cent to 12 per cent or less among 15 year olds
• From 14 per cent to 11 per cent or less among pregnant mothers

These ambitions represent reductions in smoking rates that exceed the reductions we have seen in the past five years. The Government has set out key actions in the following six areas:

• Stopping the promotion of tobacco
• Making tobacco less affordable
• Effective regulation of tobacco products
• Helping tobacco users to quit
• Reducing exposure to second-hand smoke
• Effective communications for tobacco control

Within the plan, the Government sets out actions to maximise the use of information and intelligence to support tobacco control activities. It also explains how tobacco control policies will be protected from vested interests.

New FtP panel members

L ast year the General Dental Council (GDC) agreed Corporate Plan for 2011-2015 that stated it will efficiently manage hearings capacity and productivity. As part of that promise, and following a successful and competitive recruitment campaign last year, 51 new Fitness to Practise panel members have now joined the GDC.

The new panel members were recruited by the Appointments Committee and those who were successful at interview underwent a two-day pre-induction training programme at the end of last year. They’ve been slowly introduced since the end of January this year and will sit on the Interim Orders, Professional Conduct, Health, Performance and Registration Appeals Committees. No more than two new panelists will be used on a five-person panel during their induction period.

Ten dental care professionals (DCPs) were appointed along with 19 dentists and 22 lay members.

Neil Marshall, Director of Regulation at the GDC, said: “We have seen an increase in complaints in recent years and are working hard to clear a backlog of cases. In addition to the new panel members we have also invested in more hearings staff and additional legal advisers in order to increase our hearings capacity. We’re also reviewing our fitness to practise processes and procedures across the board in order to be sure that we are dealing with these matters as speedily, effectively and efficiently as possible.”

The GDC’s key purpose is to protect patients and regulate the dental team. It supports the quality of practice and reputation of the profession by setting standards, promoting them and taking action when they are not met.

The GDC aims to deliver regulation which is proportionate, targeted, consistent, transparent and accountable. It is committed to managing its resources effectively, efficiently and sustainably and to ensuring decision making is collective, robust and accountable.

Fake drugs arrest

T hree men were arrested and more than £1m worth of suspected counterfeit and unlicensed medicines were seized yesterday as part of a simultaneousraid on three residential locations, and a secure storage unit, in north and east London.

The operation targeted the gang, with eastern European connections, for alleged supply of vast amounts of counterfeit medicines internationally including many customers within the UK. The drugs were alleged to have originated from the Far East.

The trio, who have been released on bail, are believed to be linked to numerous illegal online pharmacies selling fake prescription only medicines and other unlicensed drugs online.

MHRA Head of Operations Danny Lee-Frost said the stash of more than 500,000 tablets, recovered from what was described at the scene as an “Aladdin’s Cave of fake medicine” included Viagra, Cialis and Levitra, and was designed to “trick unsuspecting customers that they were getting the real deal.”

“These illegal online pharmacies have been supplying a massive amount of medicines, mostly to treat erectile dysfunction, hair loss and weight loss, to many people around the world,” he said.

“What we seized yesterday is estimated to have a street value of more than £1 million but the business these men were running could have generated a turnover well in excess of that.”

Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England

Wedding day?

T he Royal Wedding on April 29th has been declared a Bank Holiday. But are employees obliged to give their staff the day off? Dominic Tomkins of Bowling Law, a member of NASDA Lawyers Group, says the answer lies in the staff contract and the practice’s normal policy. If staff normally work bank holidays then it’ll be business as usual.

For practices that want to close for the wedding, says Dominic, the question of whether they have to give their staff paid holiday for the 29th will depend on the individual staff contract. If the contract allows the staff member a fixed number of days’ annual leave per year, the practice can use it to cover the wedding.

As the wedding is sandwiched between Easter and May Day, it will be and remember to consider these holiday requests in good time and fairly (be that on first-come first-served basis or some other reasonable basis).

Dominic is a lawyer with Bowling Law, members of NASDA Lawyers’ Group and can be contacted on 020 8221 8056 or email Dominic.tomkins@bowlinglaw.com.