Scams, smirks and skin

Tony Jacobs discusses the latest hot topics on GDPUK.com

So much has occurred in the time since my last column, and as always I can only convey a smidgeon of the flavour of discussions that have taken place on GDPUK.com. This column is like the précised version of the edited part of the digest!

To begin, the hearts and minds of GDPUK readers were lifted by news that the end of the “no win no fee” method of paying litigation by patients is in sight. Will this finish off certain law firms, dentists were asking? There were also conversations where thoughts often kept private were put out in public; once one colleague admitted the practice was not as busy as they would like, many joined in to discuss the facts. At local meetings, and perhaps all face to face events, there is a bravado which prevents colleagues admitting this, despite the economic climate which scares us in the face and is heavily promoted by the media. The media forgets that Sky TV, the supermarkets and mobile phone companies all seem to have growing revenues, but it seems the discretionary spend on cosmetic dentistry is suffering a hull at present.

It was also discussed that when the troubles in North Africa started, a dentist cared for a patient who had returned from Tunisia after escaping the situation. She had prepared teeth but the crowns would follow in the post [due to the emergency situation there]. So, would the UK dentist please fit them? This opened a can of worms and although there was sympathy for the patient and her plight, it seems the crowns fitted in the European Community must comply with EC regulations. In addition, it was pointed out that if something did subsequently go wrong with the crowns, the solicitor’s letter would land on the desk of the UK dentist who fitted them. It was generally agreed that this would not have been a problem 20 years ago – a dentist would inspect the crowns, try them in, and cement.

Another conversation was – Was this colleague the subject of a scam? A practice website received an email from a nudist; it attached a photo and asked if the patient could have treatment in the nude – does the practice accept nudist patients? Wind up or true test? The offending photo was not uploaded to GDPUK; it might not have been a pretty sight!

One PCT wrote to their dentists expressing the need for them to wear long sleeves when working, this being contrary to HTM01-05 advice to be bare below the elbow. One wag suggested clinical wear with one long sleeve, one short to satisfy both masters.

A news item which gained a few smirks was a practice in Munich trying a new marketing ploy; the principal and team were all dressed in traditional Alpine garb. Much skin was on display and the comments from colleagues were all concerned with Health and Safety and of course HT!

About the author

Tony Jacobs, 54, is a GDP in Manchester, in practice with partner Steve Lazerson at 406 Dental. Tony founded GDPUK in 1997, and the website now has over 11,500 unique visitors each month, who make 50,000 visits and create over 2m pages on the site every month.