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News in Brief

Hygienist raises £20,000 for mouth cancer charity
Dental hygienist Christina Chatfield has raised almost £20,000 for Mouth Cancer Action by walking 500 miles from Kirriemuir in Scotland, to Brighton, with more than 500 people joining the walk on various legs of the route. Christina said: “I was joined by a mouth cancer sufferer and her children along the route, which was all the motivation I needed. The support along the route was incredible. I remember bumping into two ramblers, and they hadn’t heard of mouth cancer. They donated £10 of their weekly pension allowance to me, and it was moments like that which kept me going.”

New York dentists offer free wine to patients
Dentists in Manhattan have been offering patients glasses of wine while they wait for their dental treatment to “take the edge off”, according to DNAinfo New York. There are a number of practices around the city that offer beverages as part of their welcome appointments. One patient said: “It’s an extra something that helps you dread the dentist a little less. I don’t know why more places don’t do it, quite frankly. The wine helps take the edge off.” Dr David Johnash of Park South Dental, which offers wine, said: “We offer the beverages as part of our efforts to create a welcoming environment and make patients more comfortable.”

Shopper finds tooth in Sainsbury’s cheese
Health experts have launched an investigation into claims that a shopper found a tooth in a piece of Wensleydale Jervaulx Blueart purchased at Sainsbury’s. According to the Mirror, Jane Betts, who had bought the cheese from a Cambridge branch of the store, was chewing on the piece of cheese when she felt the tooth in her mouth. She took the tooth to her dentist, who confirmed it belonged to somebody else.

Doctors remove 232 teeth
Doctors at the J J hospital in Byculla removed 252 teeth from a teenager, Ashik Ga-vai (17) had a swelling on the right side of the mouth when he came to the hospital in June. The doctors found that it was a rare abnormal growth affecting the second molar on the lower right side of his jaw, which contained 252 small teeth. The surgery lasted seven hours.

GDC in firing line
The General Dental Council’s actions this month have caused outrage among the profession

The General Dental Council (GDC) has caused outrage among dental professionals this July with a proposed 6 per cent hike in Annual Retention Fees (ARF), followed by an advert placed in the Telegraph days later, advertising the Dental Complaints Service (DCS). The advert reportedly cost £60,000.

The GDC has said that the increase to the ARF is needed to cover the rising number of complaints against registrants. The proposal which would see the ARF for dentists increase to £945 a year and for DCPS to £12; a 64 per cent and 6.7 per cent increase respectively.

The announcement has since had a lot of backlash on social media, with one Twitter user tweeting “Fewer job prospects, less earning potential, increased retirement age and now higher ARFs” while another said “£945 #GDC ARF is prohibitive for early career dentists who are already struggling with other fees and student debt.”

An e-petition has also been released, asking the government to review the fee increase. At the time of writing, the petition has gained 15,585 signatures.

Mick Armstrong, chair of the British Dental Association’s Principal Executive Committee, said the increase in fees is “unacceptable”, especially as the latest Professional Standards Authority (PSA) report on the GDC was highly critical of the regulator.

He said: “The suggestion that the profession pay more to fund a Council that has been shown unable to do its job properly is frankly astonishing. The rise would be unpalatable at the best of times but now it appears that the profession is being asked to foot the bill for failure.”

Dr Armstrong added: “It’s not just huge rise in fees that has left the dental profession aghast, but, when dentists are expected to tolerate poor performance by the very body that is charged with the duty to assess their fitness to practice, we are justifiably outraged.”

The BDA has even called on Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt to initiate an urgent investigation into the competence of the GDC.

Approximately a week later, dental professionals were outraged yet again by the regulator when a full-page colour advert appeared in the Telegraph.

The GDC has denied that the advert cost £60,000, stating in a press release that it cost £5,500.

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