Substance-dependent individuals report poor oral health

Researchers from Boston University have found that the majority of individuals with substance dependence problems report having poor oral health. The researchers also found that over the period of a year opioid users in particular showed a decline in oral health. The findings appear online in the Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment.

According to reports, public health, dental medicine and internal medicine faculty from Boston University investigated the effects of different substances on oral health among a sample of substance-dependent individuals. Alcohol, stimulant, opioid and marijuana users were included. The subjects were asked to self-report their oral health status on a five-point scale ranging from poor to excellent.

Statistical analysis of the patients’ reports found no significant associations between the types of substances used and oral health status. The results did show, however, that 69 percent of all subjects reported fair or poor oral health. Opioid users in the sample also exhibited worse oral health compared to one year ago.

“We found that the majority of our sample reported fair or poor oral health,” said Mediterranean D’Amore, MPH, a researcher in the Health/ Care Center. “Thus, oral health should be considered a significant health problem among individuals with substance dependence and providers should be aware of potential oral health issues.”

The researchers hope that their findings prompt more oral health interventions targeted towards individuals with substance dependence in the future. They also suggest that engaging addicts in medical care discussions may be facilitated by addressing oral health concerns.

MRSA discovered on braces

A recent study has revealed some of the bacteria found on orthodontic retainers, research after orthodontic treatment is completed, can be associated with the hospital superbug MRSA, a condition which can lead to blood poisoning.

The research, carried out by the UCL Eastman Dental Institute in London, also found a further two thirds of retainers examined contained a type of yeast connected with fungal infections, with both types of organism found potentially harmful to the population.

According to the British Orthodontic Society, nearly one million people in the UK began orthodontic treatment last year, and with more adults than ever before wanting treatment, Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, took the opportunity to encourage those who wear removable braces or retainers to develop high standards of oral hygiene.

Dr Carter said: “If you wear a removable appliance, it’s important you take the time and effort needed to keep your teeth and braces clean. If you have good oral hygiene while wearing a brace, this will help avoid developing problems such as dental decay, gum disease and tooth decalification, and can often be the difference between a successful course of treatment or otherwise. Removable appliances should be cleaned with a brush soak brush method of cleaning using an effervescent denture cleaner to help remove the bacteria and other organisms from the surface of the appliance. Simple things such as washing your hands before touching anything that can come into contact with your mouth can go a long way to reduce the risk of infection.”

Living with a brace can, at first, alter the foods consumed. The Foundation’s own ‘Tell Me About’ leaflet range has a title devoted to the topic called ‘Living With My Brace’, which gives all the relevant information about a fixed or removable brace. The title, and many more, are also available online. Simply visit www.dentalhealth.org/ tellmeabout to find out more.

Responding to the Red-Tape Challenge

The British Dental Association (BDA) is calling on the profession to join in the government’s Red Tape Challenge by drawing attention to the myriad rules and regulations that distract them from providing patient care. An example is the disproportionate and duplicative regulatory requirements now imposed by the Care Quality Commission, but there are many more.

The BDA welcomes this initiative, which government ministers say not only offers the public an opportunity to say what they really think of unnecessary regulation, but also commits them to repealing legalisation that cannot be justified.

In a new pledge to get rid of unnecessary red tape, government departments will have to justify every single set of the 21,000 statutory rules and regulations in force today. Taxation, national security, and EU laws, are the only areas exempt from this scrutiny which will take place over the next two years. The exercise will apply to legislation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, where the government has jurisdiction.

Commenting on the Red Tape Challenge, Dr Susie Sanderson, Chair of the British Dental Association’s Executive Board, said: “This initiative chimes in well with the BDA’s long running campaign against red-tape in dental practice. Specifically, we will be asking members to suggest exempting dental providers from regulation by the Care Quality Commission and from licensing by the new healthcare economic regulator, Monitor.”

“Our members have also told us that they are fed up with the ever burgeoning, and costly legislation that falls into the realm of ‘law box-ticking’, rather than an evidence base for the need for compliance by dental practices.

“It’s vital though that this red-tape initiative is not just window dressing and that we see some real reduction in the unnecessary and unjustified regulatory hurdles that hamper dentistry.”

Dentist defrauded NHS

It has been reported in a local newspaper that a dentist who defrauded the NHS in order to treat deprived patients has been suspended for two years and handed a 12-month jail term.

It was reported that Bristol Crown Court heard that Dr Jonathan Hunt had a £335,000-a-year contract to provide NHS dental work at his practice in Stapleton Road, Easton; however, he claimed £77,800 to continue treating his patients.

The court heard that Hunt used the money to keep his Stapleton Road practice afloat in order to treat people in need throughout the area, including drug addicts and an increasing number of immigrants with poor dental health.

The fraud was uncovered as a result of an investigation mounted by NHS Dental Services. Hunt, 53, admitted seven charges of false accounting between March 2005 and October 2007.

The court heard Hunt has been suspended from his job, sold his practices in Easton and North Street, Bedminster, and paid all the fraudulently claimed money back.

According to reports, Judge Carol Hagen told him: “There was noelement of personal gain whatsoever. On the contrary, you subsidised staff salaries from your own salary.”

“You provided treatment to a large number of patients under the NHS, at the highest standards, for many, many years. Up until the changes in remuneration in April, 2006, the StapletonRoad practice was flourishing. But the effect of those changes, combined with difficulties in providing the service you previously provided, led to the situation being untenable.”

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Editorial comment

As I write this the sun is shining, it's getting too warm to work indoors and in a couple of days the Easter Bunny will be delivering a large pile of delicious chocolatey treats for my already hyperactive kids (not from me I hasten to add, they have two competitive, sorry, doting grandmothers...).

Renewal of Brunei agreement

King's College London Dental Institute can look forward to three more years of collaboration aimed at the development of the dental workforce in Brunei Darussalam after the renewal of the agreement with the Government of Brunei. Professor Stephen Dunne, Head of Dental Practice & Policy at the Dental Institute and Mrs Mabel Slater, Head of Dental Care Professionals Centre for Education and Learning will take this collaboration forward.

In welcoming the news of the signing of the renewal of the agreement, Professor Dunne said: “I am delighted that we are continuing this highly successful collaboration. It is a great pleasure to work with Ministers and colleagues in Brunei Darussalam. Much has been achieved during the past three years, in particular, the establishment of a Brunei Diploma in Dental Hygiene and Therapy Programme.

“In addition, foundations have been laid for other areas of workforce development, including Dental Technology and a Dental Hygiene Therapy Conversion Programme. Discussions are also underway to establish a National Survey of Oral Health Brunei Darussalam to fully inform dental workforce requirements for the future. Thus, I am confident that the next three years of our collaboration will be just as successful as the last.”

In the meantime, discussions, being led by the Dean, continue with the University of Brunei Darussalam in respect of the possibility of collaboration in respect of BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) training.

I don’t know if dental professionals love or loathe this time of year – all that sugar and chocolate and gooey things just waiting to be scoffed against every bit of advice given at dental appointments; or the kind of cariogenic situation that gives fuel for the oral health instruction! (and I bet you thought I was ‘going down the more work for me’ route...)

Needless to say I hope that everyone enjoyed a peaceful time during the Easter break and are looking forward to the mayhem that will be the Royal Wedding and May Day!

Of course it would be remiss of me not to mention the upcoming Clinical Innovations Conference, just two weeks away. To be held May 6-7 at the Royal college of Physicians in Regent’s Park, London. Not only will some of the world’s top speakers be there, but you’ll also have a chance to see me as I will be attending! For more information about the event go to pages eight, nine and 30 of this issue.

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King's College London
Ignite your passion for dentistry

Would you like to boost your clinical knowledge, skills and career prospects with the help of some of the leading thinkers in the dental profession?

How about being one of the first to discover some of the most advanced pieces of technology currently on the market.

And how about topping it all off with a night on the tiles in Manchester’s vibrant town centre? The British Dental Conference and Exhibition 2011 19th-21st May 2011 offers dental care professionals all this and more.

In collaboration with Oral B, the event team of organisers has put together a series of sessions specifically designed for dental professionals. For the first time the BDA is providing a DCP theatre within the exhibition, offering a series of 21 bite-sized lectures on a variety of inspiring topics, all absolutely free!

On 19th May speakers will cover subjects including:

- Fear-free dentistry
- Medical emergencies – allergies and allergic reactions
- How to integrate prevention into your daily practice
- Periodontal health
- A-Z of running a successful practice
- The dental nurse as a registered professional
- The prevention of oral cancer

On 20th May speakers will cover subjects including:

- Medical emergencies
- The prevention of tooth wear
- Tooth whitening
- The developing role of dental care professionals in oral health
- Tips for reducing stress at work
- Medical emergencies – respiratory difficulties

On 21st May speakers will cover subjects including:

- Good record keeping
- Periodontal health
- Boost your profitability with business planning
- How social networking can help promote your practice
- Smoking cessation

Places are available on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the day, enabling you to drop in and out as you please. 2011’s exciting programme of lectures and seminars in the main hall is not to be missed.

Featuring a variety of leading speakers from around the world, dental care professionals will be spoilt for choice.

For more information visit www.bda.org.uk/conference or call 0207 935 0875.

Dentist sees the future with optician partnership

A joint venture partnership is opening its first practice in a high street optician in Dunfermline, Scotland.

A.S. Optometrists has bought an Ideal Dental Care franchise and has set up the fully branded concession within its practice, offering both NHS and private treatments.

It’s a ground-breaking move for Ideal Dental Care and owner Peter Thompson is keen to demonstrate the success of the new model – both in terms of the wider range of healthcare provision available to patients under one roof and also the potential business opportunities for optical companies looking at innovative ways to expand their service proposition.

“There is an immense amount of synergy between dental and optical businesses and it’s a fantastic opportunity for A.S. Optometrists to further enhance the range and scope of healthcare treatments it can offer its patients,” said Peter.

“In a competitive marketplace it’s important that businesses such as opticians have a point of difference and having a complementary service such as a dental practice can only be a good thing in retaining existing patients and attracting new ones.”

A.S. Optometrists has its first dentist in place ready for its mid-April opening and owner Ameen Sattar already has a large number of customers who have joined the waiting list to become patients.

“We are acutely aware of the needs of our patients and one thing that came through loud and clear was the demand to have a range of healthcare professions under one roof,” Ameen Sattar said.

“Franchising is common place within optometry but is still in its infancy in the dental industry – which really surprised me. But it’s good to see that there are forward thinking business people in dentistry such as Peter Thompson who is making it work both as a standalone and concessionary practice.”

Go ‘Absolutely Dental’!

The British Dental Health Foundation wants dental and health professionals to go ‘Absolutely Dental’ during National Smile Month on 15 May 2011.

The Foundation has published the first ever UK Dental Place Map, and it is hoped that everyone involved in dentistry and the health professions will add to the map and join in the fun in time for the start of National Smile Month on 15 May 2011.

Some of the many addresses and locations plotted on the map so far include Floss Street (London), Drill Lane (Canterbury), Bence Avenue (Owesay), Mouth Lane (Wisbech), Canal Street (Leeds), Surgery Lane (Hartlepool), Wisdom Drive (Hertford), Tar TAR Road (London), Smiley Court (Northen Ireland), Beaverbridge Street (Nuneaton), Scales (North West), Tongue (Scotland), Staines (Surrey), Toot Hill (Swindon) and Root (North West).

Dr Nigel Carter, Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, said: “It’s important for the image of dentistry that we can show the public a less serious side to our profession. National Smile Month is an opportunity for everyone in the profession to join in and send serious messages to the public about how to improve oral health. But it is also a chance to help change our image by engaging with the media and showing the public the fun side of the profession.

“We hope that everyone will scour their local A-Z street maps over the next few weeks and help us to plot a few more locations. We also hope that some dental practices will take photographs of them next to the street or place signs. We’ll upload the photographs onto the National Smile Month website at www.smilemonth.org and we hope that everyone’s efforts will help to create a fantastic story with the media during National Smile Month.”

Four practices win £500 each

Dental practices across England and Wales have been participating in the BDTA’s Kick out the sweets, bring on the treats’ Change4Life campaign for the past six months; displaying posters, encouraging patients to complete questionnaires and delighting their young patients with colourful stickers.

More than 2000 completed questionnaires have now been returned by the general public and four practices responsible for generating some of these responses have been selected at random as winners of the BDTA member gift voucher prizes.

The lucky winners were:

- The Robert Wakefield Dental Surgery, Driffield
- Glynhillmount Dental, Penuith
- Naitha & Naitha Dental Care, Essex
- The Dental Care Centre, London

“I’m very excited about the future of my business and hope this is the springboard which will enable me to take it to the next level!”

Tony Reed, (picutared), Executive Director at the BDTA, commented: “Many dental practices were keen to be actively involved with the BDTA’s Change4Life campaigns which was very encouraging as it was a perfect way to get children interested in dental health. Thank you to all the practices who promoted the campaign and congratulations to the winners!”

Dr Ameen Sattar and Peter Thompson
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†Subject to availability, limited to one per dental professional. Offer available while stocks last.
†∗Vs. typical High Street RRP when product not sold on promotion.
Happy the Hippo here to help

Happy the Hippo has been recruited by the British Dental Health Foundation to help teach young children how to look after their teeth. Around one third of children under the age of 12 in the UK continue to suffer from dental decay. Happy will be joining the Foundation in May to help lead the 55th National Smile Month campaign.

Despite major improvements in children’s oral health over the past 40 years, many children are still being affected by dental decay. The most recent data suggests that around a third (31 per cent) of five year olds starting primary school will have dental decay. The picture is slightly worse for children aged 12 in secondary schools – one third of children in every classroom will have signs of visible dental decay.

The theme of this year’s National Smile Month campaign is the ‘Smile Factor’. In adulthood people’s mouth, teeth and smiles are fundamental to all aspects of their life – whether career, personality, relationships, attraction or all-round good health. Creating good oral health habits from an early age are especially important to help children keep their smile factors throughout their lives.

Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, says: “Over the past 40 years we have made great improvements in children’s oral health. In 1975, nine out of every ten children aged twelve showed signs of visible dental decay.

However, the incidence of dental decay still remains too high and we hope that Happy the Hippo will show more children how to look after their teeth better.

Enzyme could fight caries

DTI. The bacterium Streptococcus salivarius, a harmless inhabitant of the human mouth, inhibits the formation of dental biofilms (plaque). Japanese researchers have discovered that the bacterium produces the FruA enzyme, which inhibits the development of plaque.

In their study the scientists separated a couple of substances produced by Streptococcus salivarius and tested their impact on Streptococcus mutants, the primary species of bacteria inhabiting the mouth and main factor for the formation of plaque. The authors suggest that FruA may actually regulate microbial pathogenicity in the oral cavity.

“We show that FruA produced by Streptococcus salivarius inhibited Streptococcus mutants biofilm formation completely in the in vitro assay supplemented with sucrose,” the researchers state in their study, which was published in the March 2011 issue of the journal Applied and Environmental Microbiology.

The researchers say the activity of the inhibitors was elevated in the presence of sucrose, and the inhibitory effects were dependent on the sucrose concentration in the biofilm formation assay medium.

FruA is produced not only by Streptococcus salivarius, but by other oral streptococci. Much of the oral microbial flora consists of beneficial species of bacteria. They help maintain oral health and control the progression of oral disease.

According to the science portal wissenschaf.de, a major step in fighting caries could be taken if the researchers find a method to implement FruA into a dental health product.

New Appointments at James Hull Associates

James Hull Associates is delighted to announce two new senior appointments as it further strengthens its board.

Current CEO Robin Pugh, (pictured left), will step up to Chairman after successfully guiding the business through its recent refinancing. Robin will take up the role of Chair- man left vacant since the de parture of Graham Hutton of Hutton Collins. Robin said “This is an exciting point in the development of the Group and I look forward to working with the team to take the business forward as the UK’s leading provider of specialist dental services.”

Robin will be replaced as CEO by Bryan Magrath, (pic- tured right), who joins James Hull Associates after a long and successful career with some of the UK’s leading blue chip retailers. Bryan’s experience in customer facing organisa tions will be vital in helping James Hull Associates become the UK’s dentist of choice both for general and specialist care. Bryan said “I’m delighted to be joining James Hull Associates and the world of dentistry. The sector is changing rapidly and JHA is ideally positioned to take advantage of the developing market. I look forward to learning from the team around me and being part of the next phase in the development of JHA.

JHA is a UK provider of special islist and general dental care with 74 practices nationwide, all dedicated to providing the highest standards of clinical care and customer service.

Happy the Hippo