**Trouble for single-handed practices**

By DTI

LONDON, UK: Profits of single-handed practices in the UK have slumped by almost 12 per cent in the last two years, indicating that the model may be a thing of the past. According to figures released in the latest Benchmarking Report by the National Association of Specialist Dental Accountants and Lawyers (NASDAL), the average profit per principal in a single-handed practice was only slightly above £335,000 in 2016, compared with £397,332 in 2014.

In contrast, practices with associates achieved a net average profit per principal of £315,446.

The problems, according to Ian Simpson, a chartered accountant and a partner in Humphrey & Co, which carries out the statistical analysis on behalf of NASDAL, could be linked to increasing costs in compliance and a general feeling among sole practitioners that they are unable to increase their fees. “As a ‘compliance culture’ continues unabated, the future will be difficult for those going it alone,” he commented regarding the figures.

“Whilst it is good news to see success for the majority of the sector, the increasing cost of compliance is a cause for concern,” added Nick Ledingham of Morris & Co, specialist dental accountants and Chairman of NASDAL. “The arrival of Making Tax Digital will do nothing to allay dentists’ fears that they are victims of a system that doesn’t understand how they do business.”

Reflecting the finances of dental practices and dentists for the most recent tax year, NASDAL’s annual benchmarking statistics are gathered from its accountant members across the UK, who together act for more than a quarter of self-employed dentists. The findings also included an increase of average net profit per principal at NHS practices from £129,285 in 2015 to £134,102 in 2016 and a slight drop of average profits of associates of £68,024 to £67,389 in the same period.

**Negative effects of dental phobia confirmed**

By DTI

LONDON, UK: One in three adults in the UK are estimated to have a persistent fear of going to the dentist. The fact that the phobia can lead to more active caries and missing teeth has recently been confirmed by researchers at King’s College London Dental Institute. The findings were based on their analysis of data on thousands of Brits from the 2009 Adult Dental Health Survey with the aim of exploring common oral health conditions of those with dental phobia.

According to the study, people with dental phobia are more likely to have one or more decayed teeth, as well as missing teeth, in comparison with non-phobic people, as they avoid seeing a dentist on a regular basis to have potentially chronic, but preventable, oral conditions treated.

Most adults with dental phobia also preferred an immediate solution, such as extraction, instead of undergoing a long-term care plan, the paper also showed.

In addition to oral health, related quality of life was also poor among those with dental phobia, the researchers further noted, with a large majority showing a high impact on their physiological, psychological, social and emotional well-being, even when levels of dental disease were controlled.

“Other research has shown that individuals with dental phobia express negative feelings such as sadness, tiredness, discouragement and general anxiety, less vitality and more exhaustion,” explained King’s Dr Ellie Heidari, lead author of the study. “Embarrassment at their poor teeth will prevent them from smiling and showing their teeth.”

By providing phobic patients with a detailed at-home oral healthcare plan, dental practitioners could help reduce acute conditions with preventative care, the researchers recommended. A preventive programme for those with dental phobia, focusing on what can be done to help them avoid acute conditions, is being developed at King’s, which carries out the statistical analysis on behalf of NASDAL, the accountancy firm that carries out the statistical analysis.

The study, titled “The oral health of individuals with dental phobia: A multivariate analysis of the Adult Dental Health Survey, 2009,” is to be published in the second April issue of the British Dental Journal. It was conducted among 10,900 participants, of whom just over 1,300 were considered to be dentally phobic.

“Sedation or no sedation?”

**IMPRINT**

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Reduced peri-implantitis risk

Plymouth researchers successfully test effectiveness of a dual-layered silver–HA nano-coating on titanium alloy implants

By DTI

PLYMOUTH, UK: Investigating the effect of a new approach using a combination of silver, titanium dioxide and hydroxyapatite (HA) nano-coatings on the surface of titanium alloy implants, researchers from Plymouth have found that the method was successful in inhibiting bacterial growth and reducing the formation of bacterial biofilm. In addition, the coating created a surface with anti-biofilm properties, thus supporting successful integration of the implants into surrounding bone and accelerating bone healing.

One of the main reasons for dental implant failure is peri-implantitis, an inflammatory process affecting the soft and hard tissue surrounding dental implants caused by pathogenic microbes that develop into biofilms. Current approaches to managing the development of biofilms include application of antimicrobial coatings loaded with antibiotics or chlorhexidine. However, these are usually only short-term measures. In addition, chlorhexidine has been reported to be potentially toxic to human cells.

Investigating a new approach to the prevention of biofilm, researchers from the School of Biological Sciences, Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, and School of Engineering at the University of Plymouth tested the effectiveness of a dual-layered silver–HA nano-coating on titanium alloy medical implants. The antibacterial performance of the coating was quantitatively assessed by measuring the growth of Streptococcus sanguinis, the proportion of live and dead cells, and lactate production by the microbes over 24 hours. The results showed that the combination successfully inhibited bacterial growth and reduced the formation of bacterial biofilm on the surface of the implants by 97.5 per cent. Uncoated controls and titanium dioxide and hydroxyapatite (HA) nano-coatings. Thus, application of a dual-layered silver–HA nano-coating on titanium alloy implants further created a surface with anti-biofilm properties without compromising the HA biocompatibility required for successful osseointegration and accelerated bone healing.

"In this cross-faculty study we have identified the means to protect dental implants against the most common cause of their failure. The potential of our work for increased patient comfort and satisfaction, and reduced costs, is great and we look forward to translating our findings into clinical practice,” commented Prof Christopher Tredwin, Head of the Peninsula Dental School. In the next step, the effectiveness of the approach needs to be tested in vivo, according to the researchers.

The study, titled “Antibacterial activity and biofilm inhibition by surface modified titanium alloy medical implants following application of silver, titanium dioxide and hydroxyapatite nanocoatings”, was published online on 17 March in the Nanotoxicology Journal.

British dentist known as “World’s fittest old-age pensioner” dies at age 97

By DTI

LONDON, UK: Most people of advanced age tend to prefer activities like gardening or watching TV. Not Dr Charles Eugster, just last year the 97-year-old Brit broke the 200 m world record in the over-95s age group. This week, the “World’s fittest old-age pensioner” and veteran dental surgeon died due to complications after heart failure, according to his publicist.

In addition to the 200 m record he broke at the 2016 British Masters Indoor Championships in London, Eugster holds the 400 m record and several long-jump records for his age group. Recently, he competed at the World Masters Athletics Championships Indoor in Daegu in South Korea.

Born in London just after World War I, he graduated with a dental surgery degree from Guy’s Hospital in 1948. In addition to this, he obtained degrees from universities in Zurich in Switzerland, where he also temporarily worked as a clinical instructor, Heidelberg in Germany and Chicago in the US. Eugster was in private practice until 1973 and continued to publish a newsletter on clinical dentistry in three languages for three decades after his retirement.

Earlier this year, he published his first book, Age is just a Number. He gave his last interview on ITV’s This Morning programme, during which he criticised the way ageing is treated in today’s society and spoke out in favour of lifelong learning.

“We, along with everyone who knew Charles, are incredibly sad to lose such a truly inspirational figure,” his publicist said on Facebook. “He has shown, by remarkable example, how fantastic life can be in older age. It has been a privilege to work with and learn from Charles.”

Kings College dental researcher receives international honours

By DTI

SAN FRANCISCO, US: One of the world’s most important awards for research in dental medicine has been given to an academic from the UK. Prof. David Bartlett from King’s College London Dental Institute was presented with the Distinguished Scientist Award in Research in Prosthodontics and Implants at the recent General Session and Exhibition of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) in San Francisco in the US.

With the award, one of the highest honours bestowed by the research association, Bartlett was recognised for outstanding research accomplishments, including conducting laboratory investigations and developing clinical techniques to measure erosive tooth wear in the prosthodontics field. Over the past 20 years, among other things, he conducted research in dental medicine has been given to an academic from the UK. Prof. David Bartlett from King’s College London Dental Institute was presented with the Distinguished Scientist Award in Research in Prosthodontics and Implants at the recent General Session and Exhibition of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) in San Francisco in the US.

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