Asbestos fibres may harm dentists too

Asbestos fibres (DTI/Photo Terry Davis)

World News

Limit staff access to drugs

Robin Goodman

TUCSON, USA: Dental offices and the pharmaceuticals used there present the risk of drug abuse, but dentists can put policies in place that help reduce the chance of illegal use of controlled substances, according to an article in Anesthesia Progress (2009, 56:112–115).

Dr Joel M. Weaver writes that dentists who place too much trust in their employees make themselves and their practices vulnerable to people who abuse controlled substances. Dentists who regulate drug access and distribution are protecting more than their patients, employees and reputation. While it’s often easier to stick with the way things have traditionally been done, making a few changes to drug-access policies makes good business sense, Dr Weaver says.

"Although change is difficult and usually meets with resistance, the thoughtful practitioner who can step back and observe his or her practice for potentially fatal mistakes in place that help reduce the chance of illegal drug use or mistaken dosages. It’s important to rely only on those licensed to handle medications, Dr Weaver says, such as physicians, dentists, nurses and pharmacists. Other employees who receive on-the-job training may be more likely to make mistakes with drug dosages and concentrations.

"Who should have access to controlled substances in the dental office? The answer is simple: only licensed professionals and as few of them as is reasonable," he says.

(Edited by Daniel Zimmermann, DTI)