Dear reader,

As the year draws to a close I would like to extend my best wishes for 2009 to all our readers. The problem we all face next year is uncertainty about the future. The financial crisis that started on Wall Street this autumn has just begun to unfold in other parts of the world, and although there are many opinions about the short- and long-term effects, no one is really able to foresee whether it will affect us for only a few months or in the years to come.

The latest news from the market place in Asia is not very promising. China, as one of the key players in the region, has just witnessed its largest drop in exports in nearly a decade. At the same time, foreign direct investment has fallen by 56.5 per cent compared to November 2008. The Asia Development Bank in Manila recently predicted a significant slowdown in economic growth of more than 5 per cent for the entire region. Policy makers and industry players have to act swiftly if the industry is to withstand the crisis.

Prospects look rather uncertain for the dental profession, in recent years, dentistry in most markets has been driven mainly by high-cost procedures, like dental implants and cosmetics, but these sectors will probably be the first to suffer from the economic slowdown. One of the factors that could help the profession is health tourism. Ironically, fuel prices have seen a sharp decrease in the last two months, which could boost the influx of patients from overseas to destinations like Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Despite what happens in 2009, we will continue to put our best efforts into informing you of the latest developments in Asian and international dentistry. We hope that you will benefit from this knowledge, and although there are many demands on your time, I hope you will find the time to read this newsletter.

This last month the clinic has been busy. I’m not complaining – what with the credit crunch in full flow, I’m happy that people are still coming for treatment.

In our practice, we use a protocol which allows us to have a clear idea of how we care for the patient. This helps us to monitor our care consistent for your clients is something we document, but there is a need for motivation as well as providing it.

One way to help keep your care consistent for your clients is to work out what will be involved in an appointment with you. Will you always disclose that you’re going to use a particular treatment, or will it be unplanned?

When you hear about a new treatment, you may think it’s important to try it out. However, you should be aware of the potential risks and benefits before deciding whether or not to use it.

In our practice, we use a protocol system so we have a clear guide to how we care for the patient. This helps us to monitor the quality of care we give our patients.

We tend to believe that among all the stressful professions in the world, it is dentists who have the highest suicide rate. Many people feel stress when they go to the dentist, and it is only logical to assume that the dentist must also feel the end result of all that stress. Not to mention listening to all of the patients who say, “No, of course, but I hate the dentist!” You may be surprised to learn that there is little evidence that dentists are more prone to stress-related suicides than the general population, according to an article on suicide rates in dentists in the journal’s study.

When a myth is repeated enough times over a long period of time, it begins to be accepted as the truth. Since 1975, both the dental and professional media have repeatedly portrayed dentists as being suicide prone, and although there are many reports of dentists attempting suicide, the profession is not at any higher risk than the general population, according to an article in the journal’s study.

Motivating the motivator

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