SHOFU: Fastest growth from China

By DTI

SINGAPORE: SHOFU Dental Asia-Pacific attended the UAE International Dental Conference and Arab Dental Exhibition (AEEDC) in Dubai this year to introduce its new abrasive and restorative materials to professionals in the Middle East. The global manufacturer of dental materials and equipment has been eyeing the region for a long time, but ongoing market restrictions remain a challenge. However, SHOFU is also targeting countries in Asia Pacific that promise stronger growth.

While trade show attendees from the Middle East expressed great interest in Shofu’s materials and digital dental cameras, the company feels that the market conditions do not facilitate foreign investment. “Our meetings were good—at though the fair could have been stronger. We met dentists and dental students from the UAE, Kuwait, Iran and Iraq. This is a big market, especially for Asian companies, but the market needs to open more to ease import and export,” stated Patrick Loke, Managing Director of SHOFU Dental Asia-Pacific. Given the company’s historic success in China, SHOFU is continuing its careful assessment of business opportunities before possibly opening a production facility or sales office in the Middle East.

SHOFU was founded in 1922 in Kyoto at the time when growing national debt and political turmoil endangered Japan’s strong economy. The company initially produced high-quality porcelain teeth for the local market, but soon added abrasives, silicone polishers, composites and amalgam fillings to its portfolio. The 1970s saw the opening of new manufacturing facilities in Japan and sales offices in the US and Germany, while Asia Pacific remained relatively untouched despite SHOFU’s geographical proximity.

SHOFU finally established a new subsidiary in Singapore in 1980. Since then, Shofu Dental Asia-Pacific has reached a number of milestones in the region. In 1985, SHOFU began operating in China with the establishment of a world-wide sales network and opened a production facility and sales office 20 years later. Back then, the country had only 50,000 dentists and fewer than 200 dental clinics to serve its 1.3 billion people—about 400,000 dental professionals would have been needed to provide adequate oral health care according to Western standards.

In the last decade, the Chinese government has invested substantially in dental training facilities and schools. The result was an increase in dental clinics that led to double-digit growth in relatively new market segments, such as dental implants.

Loke is very pleased with SHOFU’s sales in China. “We see the fastest growth coming from China. For the most part, China is now a fully developed country with huge opportunities to conduct business. We have experienced a double-digit increase in Chinese sales and the nation remains our most important market in the region,” he said during AEEDC. “Other countries in the South-East Asian region are also developed but growth is slower. However, India is coming up. SHOFU will start operating in India soon. There is growing awareness regarding dental health there.”

New permanent resin cement

By DTI

PARIS, France: Completing its bonding range with TOTAL C-RAM, dental product manufacturer and restoration expert Itena Clinical has launched a new self-etching and self-adhesive permanent resin cement.

The TOTAL C-RAM is particularly indicated for the cementation on enamel, dentine, metal, ceramic, porcelain, zirconium & composites and features a bonding strength that is 50 per cent superior to that of CIVMAR on zirconia, the French company said.

Straumann, Anthogyr partner

By DTI

BASEL, Switzerland/SALLANCHES, France: Straumann and Anthogyr have announced that they have entered into a new partnership that will see Anthogyr’s business activities in China being transferred to Straumann by the middle of the year. Furthermore, the Swiss dental implant company has acquired a 30 per cent stake in the French manufacturer.

The agreement, according to both parties, is to become effective by the end of March this year. Financial details of the deal were not disclosed.

Straumann said in a press release that the sales capabilities of the two companies are expected to provide the critical mass to compete and grow successfully in the premium segment, where they have already been active for a number of years.

In an effort to extend its leading market position, Straumann recently established a new country organisation and distributor network that is intended to cover all of the provinces of China. Anthogyr’s dental implant system has been registered in and is established in China, where it is positioned as a high-quality, attractively priced option, according to the company.