In October, Singapore’s recently opened Marina Bay Beach Resort will become a showcase for everything related to digital dentistry when the first CAD/CAM & Computerized Dentistry International Conference opens its doors to dental professionals from all over the Asia Pacific region. Organised by the Centre for Advanced Professional Practices (CAPP) in Dubai, the congress is based on the successful concept of the CAD/CAM & digital dentistry events held in the Middle East.

Dr Dobrina Mollova, Managing Director of CAPP, spoke with Dental Tribune Asia Pacific about the state of preparations and the prospects of the field in Asia.

Dr Mollova, you recently announced that the first Asia Pacific CAD/CAM & Computerized Dentistry International Conference will be held in Singapore. What is behind the decision to have another conference there?

Dr Dobrina Mollova: Our first Dubai conference held in 2006 was an unexpected success and so we were able to develop the concept further. Over the years, some of our sponsors approached us with the idea of holding a similar event in Asia Pacific. Following the interest, we decided to launch preparations 18 months ago for a conference to be held in Singapore. Since then, we have received significant support not only from the industry but also from government organisations such as the Singapore Tourism Board, who fully supports our event, and the Singapore Dental Association (SDA), who functions as the co-organiser. That is why we are confident that we will be able to transfer this concept to the Asia Pacific region successfully.

Preparations for the Singapore conference already started in late 2010. Are you on schedule?

Preparations are going very well and we will be pushing our marketing campaign after IDEM. Until now, we have been quiet so as not to distract the marketing efforts of our Singapore partners. Surprisingly, there are already many dentists from the Middle East who are coming to IDEM and who are also interested in participating in our Singapore conference.

What are the main challenges of bringing the concept to Singapore?

The growth of CAD/CAM dentistry alongside new technology, materials and equipment has seen a rapid integration into both dental offices and laboratories. Without a doubt, digital technology is becoming essential for every dental practice and laboratory. The question is: are we prepared to keep up to date with this growing industry, and are we able to implement this pool of information in our practices without the proper expertise? This will be the main challenge for us.

Are you planning to extend the concept to other countries in Asia?

Our target is the entire Asia Pacific region, which is much larger than the market in the Middle East.
Middle East. Similar to Dubai, Singapore has become a commercial hub for the entire region and, for this reason, we are inviting professionals from all over Asia Pacific to come and learn about the promising technologies in the dental industry.

How large is the dental CAD/CAM market in Singapore in terms of size and penetration?

To date, we do not have meaningful statistics for Singapore. According to MarketResearch.com, however, the Japanese market for dental prosthetics and CAD/CAM devices was the largest in the Asia Pacific region in 2010, followed by the Republic of Korea. In the same year, the total Chinese and Indian markets for dental CAD/CAM grew by 7.3 per cent. The global market for CAD/CAM is experiencing double-digit growth at the moment.

Looking at Dubai, are you able to say something about the impact your conference had on the field of dentistry and how digital technology is perceived?

This is an interesting question, as I have just been through the recordings of our first conferences. There is clearly a huge difference in view of presentations, the knowledge we have gained and the technology that is available. Back in 2006, we started with only 160 participants, who were mainly dentists. Meanwhile, this number has quadrupled and includes dentists, dental technicians and dental assistants—basically, the entire dental team. An increasing number of participants are specialists, who have gradually become interested in the aspects of computerised dentistry, but at first there were only prosthodontists.

Will the Singapore conference reflect this diversity?

The congress will not be limited to dental CAD/CAM technology. Unlike our conference in Dubai, this time we want to put more emphasis on 3-D imaging systems, a technology that has shown the potential to transform diagnostics in dentistry completely. Besides treatment planning and diagnostics, the list of topics will range from the selection of materials for different indications to the use of digital technology in more traditional clinical areas like orthodontics.

Will you also offer seminars or hands-on workshops during the Singapore conference?

The main goal of this conference will be to bring a group of high-end dental professionals together to enable them to discuss and learn about these new technologies in detail. Therefore, we do not plan to offer any hands-on training at the moment unless there is a request by the industry. This does not rule out such training in the future. At the fifth CAD/CAM & Computerized Dentistry Conference in Dubai in 2011, for example, we had seven workshops, which were well received.

How many attendees do you hope for?

We are aiming at 400 attendees for the first conference, which in my experience is a realistic target, given the size of the market and our presence in Asia Pacific through our partners. We are already cooperating with several dental associations, while seeking new professional partners from the dental community who are eager to work with us. Owing to the enthusiasm of the SDA, we believe that we can make this event successful. Those who are interested will be able to find our flyers at the SDA booth at IDEM Singapore on 20 to 22 April 2012. They can also visit us at www.capp-asia.com or www.facebook.com/cappasiapacific.

Dr Mollova, thank you very much for this interview.