Unregulated indemnity continues

Thousands of dentists are thought to be working without full insurance cover or using schemes that have loopholes—leaving patients without any compensation when they receive botched treatment.

The Dental Defence Union, the specialist dental division of the Medical Defence Union, claims that many patients mistakenly assume their dentist or doctor is insured in the same way as their car or house, but this is not the case.

Under the current, outdated system of dental indemnity, dentists are still not required to have insurance.

The DDU would like the General Dental Council (GDC) to specify how dentists should be indemnified.

So far it has not insisted that this should only be through insurance, though it has the power to do so.

Botched dental work by the likes of Silverio Di Rocca and Alicia Caffarena, who fled the country after being found out, shows that fundamental reform is needed to close loopholes in the insurance policies covering dentists.

The Italian couple fled after botching the treatment of 16 patients.

The couple, who worked at practices in Cambridge, London and Surrey, were struck off for practices in Cambridge, London and Kirklees in West Yorkshire, was struck off for failed to represent them over the responses to the consultation and all the local councils and MPs who expressed a view. It is frankly high-handed.

No-one doubts that teeth need better care, but the obvious alternative is more NHS dentists not mass medication where there are contested benefits and ill-understood risks.

The decision, which will affect around 200,000 people, followed a large public consultation and months of debate.

The decision by South Central Strategic Health Authority to back fluoridation, is the first under 2005 laws, giving health authorities powers to demand the service from water companies.

John Spottiswoode, chairman of Hampshire Against Fluoridation, called it ‘absolutely disgraceful’ and said: ‘They have re-fused to listen to all the evidence we have given them. They have ignored the will of the people—72 per cent didn’t want it and yet they still are going to do it. It is deeply unethical.’

SHAs are required to make decisions on the ‘coherence of the arguments advanced’ and not simply on numbers of people and organisations for or against proposals.

Authorities in north-west England, Derbyshire, Bristol, and Kirklees in West Yorkshire are thought to be among those preparing to go down the same route.