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News in Brief

CIC conference
One of the highlights of this year’s Clinical Innovation Conference is a presentation by periodontist Dr Peter Galgut. The Clinical Innovation Conference (CIC) is being held at the Royal College of Physicians on 7-8 May. The talk, which is being supported by Philips Healthcare, will highlight how esthetic periodontal innovations to help patients achieve superior results. Dr Galgut qualified as a dentist in 1971, and gained an MSc with distinction in Periodontology in 1983. Since then he has obtained the MRD (Membership in Restorative Dentistry) and also the MFDS from the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

James Hull winners
The James Hull Group has announced the winners for its annual awards programme. Peter Embling has been named as practice manager of the year. Sue Hall won dental nurse of the year and Pam Stawes won receptionist of the year. Paul Dutton has been awarded employee of the year and Megan Howlett-Permain was named the CEO’s award. A spokeswoman for the James Hull Group said: ‘Peter Embling’s dedication to dentistry, his ability to develop and run a very strong team, and his sense of humour have all earned him this well-deserved title. ’

Harald Heymann returns
World-renowned expert Dr Harald Heymann returns to London on 16 July to lead a British Dental Association seminar on issues in adhesive and aesthetic dentistry, which is part of the BDA’s Clinical Expert Series, will consider the issues facing practitioners aiming to achieve consistent, long-term success in conserva-
tive aesthetic dentistry, begin-
ning with an evidence-based overview of what works. The full-day seminar takes place on Friday 16 July at London’s Novotel London St Pancras Hotel. Dr Heymann is professor and graduate programme director at the Department of Operative Dentistry at the University of Carolina in the USA. He is a consultant to the American Dental Association, the author of more than 180 scientific publications and editor-in-chief of the Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry.

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New research claims acupuncture can cut anxiety levels ➤ page 2

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Ahh! Nostalgia
Jane Armitage remembers the ‘good old days’ of dental nursing ➤ page 12

Money Matters

Green foundations
Andy Axton details why looking at your carbon footprint is vital for selling potential ➤ page 18

Special feature

GDC to address FtP backlog
Additional funding agreed from reserves to help clear case backlog and ensure capacity for rise in Fitness to Practise investigations

T he General Dental Council (GDC) has agreed an additional £5.3m of funding to its budget for 2010. The measure was agreed at its March Council meeting, it was also de-
cided at that time to make the in-
formation public.

The GDC stated: “The GDC is financially stable, with circa £14m remaining in our reserves. The discussions at our last Coun-
cil meeting were not around our financial stability, but around our desire to address some issues in the regulatory process such as Fitness to Practise.”

The main reason for the ad-
ditional funding is a £5.7m defici-
cy in the money needed to bring the backlog of Fitness to Practise (FtP) investigations up to date. There was a 40 per cent increase in cases in 2009.

Currently, there are more than 850 cases in the system, of which roughly 180 are more than 12 months old. The GDC received 1,437 new cases in 2009, which represented a rise of 40 per cent on 2008. Of these, 1,249 (87 per cent) went to assessment and 852 were referred to the In-
vestigating Committee (IC). The 852 IC referrals represent 68 per cent on 2008. Of these, 1,249 were referred to the IC, which roughly 180 are more than 24 months old and had not been listed for a hearing and 11 which were between 18 and 24 months old and had not been listed.

The GDC reported: “Since 2007 we’ve seen six per cent more of our complaints coming from dental professionals themselves as well as a significant growth in complaints from the public. But the increase in complaints isn’t just a trend within the GDC. Com-
plaints figures relating to all NHS services in England went up by over ten percent between 2007 and 2009. We also clearly have more registrants now (who can be com-
plained about). With more regis-
trants it is inevitable there will be more costs involved in taking ac-
ton and when things go wrong. This drives a significant part of our activity and our cost base and we have to build our capacity to deal with this significant increase in the volume of work in our core regulatory functions.”

The level of delay has been a cause of concern, as stated in the proposal document. It is clear that we are not currently dealing with all cases in a timely man-
ner and that a new approach is needed. A significantly reduced
throughput time for all but the most complex cases is desirable in terms of both patient protec-
tion and fairness to registrants who are practising under the shadow of an allegation.”

Chair of the Council of the GDC, Alison Lockyer, said: “We have a robust discussion at the last Council meeting about making this significant investment in im-
proving our regulatory processes. This will help us address some of the Fitness to Practise issues which our CHRE 2009 review is likely to flag up. Making the in-
vestment now will put us in a bet-
ter position to manage our cases more effectively. This is essential for those who are under investi-
gation and to protect the reputa-
tion of all dental professionals.”

Other issues facing the Coun-
cil include:
• Regularisation of the staffing budget to recognise commitments made in 2009 - £708k
• Changes to meeting profiles of Committees and associated arrangements commissioned by this Council - £580k
• Proposals for tackling the chal-
lengeing backlog of Fitness to Practise allegations where there is the experience of a 40 per cent increase in volumes in 2009 - £571k
• Recruitment of replacement Le-
gal Advisers for Hearings - £10k
• Revalidation project funding - £250k
• Overseas Registration Exam budget regularisation - £178k
• Registration proposals (part head count/part projects) - £170k
• Customer Advice and Informa-
tion Team capacity - £57k
• Finance related projects (X5) - £102k
• Changes to the priorities and the restructuring for the External Relations team - (£270k)

The implications for the fu-
ture financial position of the GDC will include a look at rais-
ing the Annual Retention Fee by £800-£100 and the use of ‘hot-
desking’ in the Council offices to maximise office capacity.

Get the point
New research claims acupuncture can cut anxiety levels

Medicprop

• Established property fund specializing in the dental sector wish to acquire practice freeholds across the UK
• Medicprop will purchase your property freehold in return for a lease to the dentist or partners
• Sale and leaseback enables you to release 100% of equity from your property
• Leasing provides considerable ongoing Tax advantages
• Single practices or Group disposals
• Set up Practice is considered
• The Fund already has a large portfolio and has an extensive track record in the sector
• If you have a suitable property and would like to discuss in strictest confidence please contact Philip Ong 0208 860 8765 or philip@medicprop.com

No chips
From a windscreen repair shop to dental practice in a few steps!

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