Saliva samples help with early detection of mouth cancer

Saliva samples have been found to help with the early diagnosis of mouth cancer, according to new research.

The research published in the Clinical Cancer Journal saw scientists catch mouth cancer by checking saliva.

Professor David Wong and a team of researchers from the University of California Los Angeles School of Dentistry compared 50 samples obtained from mouth cancer patients with 50 healthy specimens. They found 50 microRNA chemicals that could help cancer diagnosis.

“Hit’s a Holy Grail of cancer detection to be able to measure the presence of a cancer without a biopsy, so it is very appealing to think that we could detect a cancer-specific marker in a patient’s saliva,” said Jennifer Grandis, professor of otolaryngology and pharmacology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and Cancer Institute and a senior editor of Clinical Cancer Research.

The news has been welcomed by the British Dental Health Foundation – organisers of Mouth Cancer Action Month which runs throughout November.

“Early detection saves lives in the fight against mouth cancer – improving survival chances to more than 90 per cent from the current five-year survival rate of just half of cases.”

Foundation chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said: “With early diagnosis so vital these studies could hopefully provide a lifesaving boost. However it is important for further studies to prove this an effective and accurate test even in pre-cancerous cells. These early studies used only saliva samples where mouth cancer is present.

“We have committed more resources than ever to Mouth Cancer Action Month after the shocking figures released this year. It really is time for action and to heed the campaign’s message – ‘If In Doubt, Get Checked Out.’”

Annual retention fee frozen

Dental professionals’ annual retention fee has been frozen and will stay the same for the third year running, according to the General Dental Council (GDC).

Council members have decided not to increase the annual retention fee (ARF) for dentists later this year (deadline 31 December) and dental care professionals next year (31 July 2010).

This means the cost of annual registration renewal for dentists will remain at £438 and £96 for dental care professionals.

The cost of being on one of the General Dental Council’s specialists lists stays at £52.

President of the General Dental Council, Hew Mathewson said: “We know living through the credit crunch isn’t easy for anyone. That’s why we’ve decided to hold registration fees at their current levels. I’m pleased to be able to say the Council has built up its reserves and will manage the budget effectively for the coming year without increasing fee levels.”

He added: “The GDC is funded by registrants’ fees and we take very seriously the importance of spending our budget responsibly.”

“Our expenses include inspecting and monitoring training courses to ensure those joining the register are up to scratch.”

“Dealing with complaints is our biggest expense – in particular the very small number which reach formal public hearings.”

“We also attend events across the UK and produce publications, to help build and maintain high professional standards.”

Wales gets its first giant integrated health centre

Wales’s first giant integrated health centre, bringing together a range of health professionals, including dentists, nurses, GPs, physiotherapists and nutritionists, is opening this month.

The £10m centre will change health services for thousands of patients.

The Port Talbot Primary Care Resource Centre has been developed by Neath Port Talbot Local Health Board (LHB) and brings together health, local authority and voluntary sector staff under one roof.

An LHB spokeswoman said: “The resource centre will provide a base for a variety of services including GP, district nursing, health visiting, dentistry, pharmacy, physiotherapy, nutrition and dietetic services.

“Social services staff and various voluntary sector agencies will also provide services from here. From August 2010, a dental training practice will be established, offering placements for five trainees, which will greatly assist in the recruitment and retention of local professionals.”

LHB chairman Ed Roberts said: “This is the first resource centre of its kind in Wales which offers huge opportunities for modernising the way services can be provided.

“Four years of planning has now come to fruition and I would like to thank the many people who have been involved.”

Assembly Health Minister Edwina Hart will formally open the centre in November.

BACD holds restorative dentistry study club

The British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry is holding a study club on ‘Symposium in Dentistry – Orthodontics and the Restorative Dentist’.

Dr Peter Huntley, founder of Quality Orthodontics, one of the country’s largest adult orthodontic practices, will be doing the presentation.

Dr Huntley is also a part-time lecturer at the Royal London and Eastman Dental Hospitals and in this session will be focusing on how interdisciplinary management of complex problems can generate improved outcomes.

The presentation will cover areas including gingival margin problems, the redistribution of space, paralleling teeth and access for hygiene and third molar issues.

The session on restorative dentistry will take place on 5 November at the British Dental Association.

For more information or a booking form contact Suzy Rowlands on 020 8214 8526 or email suzy@bacd.com