At what age should a person be before they can have their teeth bleached? This is a topic fuelling heated discussions on the forum lately. Members talked about whether they thought someone aged 15 was too young to have this treatment, and whether the pulps of those younger teeth were too large to take the effects. One member admitted to carrying out the procedure for his daughter when she was 14, to which another replied that for younger patients, they use only 10 per cent solutions.

Meanwhile, without fail, someone always posts an ethical dilemma on GDPUK. This time it concerned a patient due to have extraction of final teeth for a clear- ance. The F/F was ready to fit, but the patient did not bring the rest of the final payment. Should one trust the patient, or withhold the dentures? How would the GDC view this? As the patient was a pub landlord, we had to ask ourselves whether they would let someone have a drink in his pub without paying for it? It was generally accepted that the GDC would view withholding the dentures as unprofessional, and not in the patient’s best interests. The general view was that you can trust the large majority of people, and that trust will be repaid over the years in goodwill.

Another dilemma concerned a patient flitting between two practices, playing one off against the other with layers of deceit. Advice given was that the dentist-patient relationship has broken down, so this can be used to lose the young man. Another suggested that as under the nGDS contract, one cannot discriminate, even against liars.

These are just a few of the subjects dissected on the forum. Others included apex locators, loupes, Tab Dental software, NHS patient charges in Wales, aspirin and extractions, as well as alleged latex shortages.

Some unusual personal CPD was gleaned when a 45-year-old male list member and regular poster suffered a heart attack (we wished him well) and posted information about myocardial infarctions from the web to the group. Forced to rest and recover at home, he was relieved to be online and stay in the loop with GDPUK.

Dr Anthony V. Jacobs started the GDP-UK emailing list in 1997, and the group membership is now just under 2000. The list is read in all corners of the UK dental profession as well as by laboratories, and the trade and dental industry. Qualifying in London in 1979, Dr Jacobs is now in partnership with Dr Stephen Lazarus, practicing at 406 Dental in Manchester. He enjoys his profession, and takes pride in providing both simple and complex gentle dentistry, as well as caring for families in a relaxed atmosphere. Dr Jacobs has a long-term commitment to continuing professional development, both for himself, and for the profession in general through his mailing list. He has been a member of the British Dental Association (BDA) since 1975, and is presently Chairman of the Advisory Group, as well as vice-Chair of the Bury and Rochdale Local Dental Committee (LDC). Dr Jacobs also sits on the committee and helps to organise the annual conference of Local Dental Committees.