BACD: research foreign dentists

The medical tourism industry is doing so well at the moment that London has just hosted the Health Tourism Show 2008, a new event covering practically every aspect of medical, dental, cosmetic and health treatment abroad.

The event which claims to be the first of its kind in the world, showcased clinics from over 20 countries, offering everything from cardiology to breast enlargement and dental work.

Organisers of the show, held at London’s Kensington Olympia, claim the credit crunch is making dental treatment more affordable.

They also claim that the shortage of NHS dentists in Britain means dental treatment overseas is getting increasingly popular because it is cheaper than the UK.

One Portuguese clinic at the show offering dental holidays in the Algarve, Multihsima-Medefi-dental, provides dental implants priced at 800 euro (£655) each.

However Britain’s leading oral health charity is warning people to be cautious over these ‘dental tourism bargains’. British Dental Health Foundation chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said: ‘The Foundation recommends patients thinking of travelling for their treatment to keep their eyes open to potential pitfalls. It is very much a case of ‘buyer beware’.

‘It is important that anyone considering travelling is aware of potential risks. If there are any complications after treatment abroad, there could be all sorts of questions arising. For example, are you willing to fly back? What are your legal rights as a foreign patient? Do you have the money required for corrective treatment in this country, if required? Plus who will pay if things go wrong?’

The BDHF recommends patients shop around in the UK before considering travelling abroad.

Cash plans, maintenance schemes and capitation plans can all help make UK dental treatment more affordable.

Ex-dental chief tells lies

The former chairman of the British Dental Association (BDA) has been struck off by the General Dental Council for fraudulently claiming £54,000 in expenses from the BDA.

Trevor Mann, of Sutton in Surrey, claimed expenses for meetings at the BDA from October 2005 to July last year.

He said that he worked at a surgery in Byfleets, Surrey, but an investigation found there was no trace of the practice.

The professional conduct committee report said: ‘Mr Mann quite clearly lied to Mr Ward about the scope and status of his practice.’

It added: ‘From 6 October 2005 to 27 July 2007, Mr Mann inappropriately and dishonestly claimed from the BDA sessional allowances stating that he had read the BDA expenses policy and was entitled to claim sessions for Monday to Friday. This was misleading and dishonest.

Mr Mann’s dishonesty was compounded by the fact that the claims were made over a sustained period of time and were not isolated incidents.’

The report concluded: ‘The Committee hereby directs the Registrar to erase the name of Trevor Irvin John Mann from the Dentist Register’.

A spokesman for the BDA said: ‘The British Dental Association notes the conclusion of the case it referred to the General Dental Council. All of the money inappropriately claimed from the BDA has been repaid. The BDA now considers that the case is closed.’

Mr Mann did not attend the hearing at the GDC.

Comedy’ dentures

Americans think comic star, Ricky Gervais, has such bad teeth they must be comedy dentures. Gervais who plays a dentist in his new film ‘Ghost Town’ said he was ‘dismayed’ when an American journalist said his teeth were so awful they must be fake.

The star who found fame through the TV series The Office said he was ‘in a private interview’ when he was told the journalist ‘These are my own teeth. Would I be wearing joke teeth to an job interview?’

‘I felt I had to point out, I’m not wearing a fat suit either. She was a bit embarrased.’

Eroding enamel

The use of low pH mouthwashes erodes dental enamel causing the teeth to become more sensitive, according to recent study.

Researchers at the Division of Restorative Dentistry in Boston, found people with less enamel complained of much greater sensitivity to hot and cold.

The study looked at three low pH mouthwashes. Results showed that enamel loss in situ and in vitro was progressive over time with all three mouthwashes.

As a result of the study, the researchers recommended that low pH mouthwashes should not be considered for long term or continuous use and should never be used prior to brushing.

Pay rises

NHS Employers have called for pay rises for dentists in 2009/10 to be limited to two per cent.

It argues that a balance has to be struck between fairness to staff and affordability.

In evidence submitted to the Doctors’ and Dentists’ Review Body, NHS Employers said it recognised that ‘inflationary pressures and efficiency expectations are putting pressure on services and any unfunded cost pressures from pay could threaten patient care’.

Employers within the NHS believe an award of two per cent would be affordable for dentists who are employed by the NHS, providing there is a corresponding uplift in the funding allocation for 2009/10.

NHS Employers also argues that there should be no change to the General Dental Services (GDS) contract, in the light of increases in the 2008/09 award (recommended 5.4 per cent) against a backdrop of decreasing expenses for dental practices.

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