Tooth decay highest amongst England’s most deprived

New figures on hospital admissions for dental procedures reveal higher rates for patients from the most deprived sectors of the population when the primary diagnosis is tooth decay

Almost one fifth of such admissions were for patients from the most deprived ten per cent of the population. However, those from the least deprived ten per cent of the population accounted for only four per cent of admissions with a primary diagnosis of dental caries.

Health and Social Care Information Centre’s Chief Executive Tim Straughan said: “[These] figures show a correlation between rates of hospital dental procedures caused by tooth decay and the patient’s level of deprivation. This report has implications for the public’s dental health and for hospital trusts in England that perform dental services, in particular those that serve England’s most deprived areas.

FGDP(UK) to host series of seminars

Delegates attending this year’s British Dental Conference and Exhibition at Excel London will be given the opportunity to hear from some of the most reputed professionals in the industry courtesy of the FGDP(UK). Leading dental professionals, including Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Imaging at Manchester University, Keith Horner, and FGDP(UK) Course Director Paula McHenry will be speaking on a variety of topics from minor oral surgery to new radiology guidelines. Each session will last between an hour and ninety minutes. All four seminars will be taking place over Thursday 25 and Friday 26 April and offer an exciting opportunity to investigate some of the new developments within dentistry and recognise how to implement best practice as delegates develop their career.
A Government decision to award general dental practitioners in England an uplift to their funding of 1.5 per cent for 2013/14 will do little to relieve the increasing pressure on high street dentists, the British Dental Association (BDA) has warned.

The Department of Health’s decision has this year been made without a recommendation from the Doctors’ and Dentists’ Review Body, following its decision to suspend DDRB’s role in determining pay settlements.

The Department of Health has also signalled that it intends to introduce the way that dental contracts are managed at the end of the 2013/14 financial year, although details of these changes are yet to be published.

Dr John Miles, Chair of the BDA’s General Dental Practice Committee, said: “While dentists understand the financial challenges facing the public purse that sit behind this decision, they also know that their practice expenses are continuing to escalate and that their professional lives are becoming ever more challenging.

“Dentistry in England is facing an uncertain time with new commissioning arrangements being implemented in just a few weeks and new contractual arrangements being piloted.

“Dentists are working hard not only to care for their patients today, but also to make these reforms work to build a better future.

“That future will also depend on the funding shortfalls that are being endured by practices now being recouped in future years. The BDA will continue to remind Government of this and look to the DDRB for future recommendations to more effectively support dentists’ hard work caring for patients.

“We will also press for the all-important detail of the changes to contract management that have been announced alongside today’s announcement. Inevitably, the devil will be in the detail of these changes and we will be looking very closely at them.”

Salaried dentists will receive a one per cent pay uplift, in line with the award given to other NHS employees.

Thousands encouraged to use internet to improve health

The NHS Commissioning Board (NHS CB) has announced plans to help up to 100,000 more people to use the internet to improve their health.

The Board is forming a new partnership with the Online Centres Foundation to fund existing UK Online Centres to train and support people to help their health and well-being through the internet. The funding will support the Online Centres Foundation to develop at least 50 of their existing centres in public places such as libraries, community centres cafes and pubs to become digital health hubs.

These hubs will provide training and support to help people go online for the first time so they can start using websites such as NHS Choices. As people become more confident they will also be encouraged to do more online, such as provide comments on their use of the NHS or order repeat prescriptions online.

To support the centres and the people who use them there will be online health information training on their website www.learnmyway.com.

In addition to the health hubs, the programme will also establish a new network of larger NHS digital projects working in health locations (including hospitals and GP surgeries) to pilot innovative approaches to getting involved in online healthcare.

The NHS Commissioning Board is concerned that those who experience the greatest health inequalities – and who have the greatest need of NHS services - are least likely to be online. People over the age of 65 account for more than half of NHS spending, but 56 per cent of those over the age of 65 have never been online before and half of the eight million people who have never used the internet have a disability. Homeless people, travellers and some rural communities experience health inequalities and poor health – but often also lack access to online services.

To support the centres and their users, a digital health information learning package will be established on the online learning platform Learn my way, which will help evaluate the best way to encourage people to find health and information and complete transactions online.

Britons fear tooth loss more than weight gain

A new survey from dental brand Corso-Dyl has revealed that permanent tooth loss is the nation’s biggest confidence killer.

Out of the adults surveyed, 51 per cent said that losing a tooth would be the worst blow to their confidence, compared to 19 per cent who cited changes in weight, and ten per cent bed hair.

Despite these findings, 48 per cent of those surveyed said that healthy-looking gums are not as important as other aspects of their oral health, and only 18 per cent said they would visit the dentist if they had gum problems.

Dentist Amit Rai commented: “Gum disease is prevalent in Britain and this new report highlights what I see in my practice on a daily basis - that some British adults seem to know little about the health of their gums. Although most patients nowadays understand the importance of brushing twice daily, they don’t often realise that the bugs, which cause gum disease, love to hide within the spaces in-between their teeth.

A build-up of bugs causes the gums to become inflamed, commonly resulting in red, swollen gums which may bleed upon flossing or brushing. Over time gums could pull away from teeth and, if left untreated, gum disease could result in the scary reality of tooth loss. There are many products available to treat gum disease. Where appropriate, I often recommend a medicated mouthwash, containing chlorhexidine, for short term use to treat the signs of gum disease, as well as a good oral care routine.”

Smoking increases lung cancer risk after radiation exposure

The risk of developing cancer or tissue damage after exposure to ionising radiation varies among people because of genetic and lifestyle factors, according to the Health Protection Agency’s independent Advisory Group on Ionising Radiation (AGIR).

An AGIR report concludes that there is strong evidence that smoking substantially increases the risk of developing lung cancer after exposure to ionising radiation; an effect particularly marked in people exposed to radon gas. There is also evidence that genetic factors affect the way people react to ionising radiation, although further research is needed to confirm this and identify all the genes responsible.

The conclusions raise ethical issues that will need careful consideration and could have implications for advice given to smokers who undergo radiotherapy, work with ionising radiation or are accidentally exposed.

Professor Bryn Bridges, chairman of AGIR, said: “Smoking may well be important when considering future risks in exposed people. It is an important time to start to consider how knowledge of lifestyle factors such as smoking might be incorporated into occupational, medical and public radiation protection.”

Another risk from smoking
Tooth loss? Rather have the flu!

Americans are more afraid of losing a natural tooth than they are of getting the flu, according to a January survey by the American Association of Endodontists. Despite an especially bad flu season that taxed hospital emergency rooms nationwide and led some cities to declare a public health emergency, more survey respondents hoped to avoid losing a permanent tooth (74 per cent) than avoid getting the flu (73 per cent).

Also, 70 per cent of respondents say they want to avoid getting a root canal, and 60 per cent were more anxious about root canal treatment than getting a tooth pulled (57 per cent) or receiving a dental implant (54 per cent).

The underlying factor of these numbers could be connected to outdated concerns about root canal treatment.

During the seventh annual Root Canal Awareness Week, March 17-23, the AAE wants to dispel myths that root canals are painful and encourage patients who need a root canal to see an endodontist to save their natural teeth.

“We want patients to know that there is no reason to be anxious about receiving a root canal,” said AAE President Dr. James C. Kulild. “With today’s advanced technologies, root canals are no more painful than getting a filling - root canal treatment is actually one of the best ways to save your natural tooth!”

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* Based on % hydraulic conductance reduction

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References:
1. Dentine Tubule Occlusion, DOF 1 – 2012.

Do not recommend this product if patients have a history of kidney disease, hyperoxaluria, kidney stones or malabsorption syndrome, or take high doses of vitamin C (1000mg or more per day).
New drug treats oral mucositis

Mouse model studies show that administering genetically or topically, protein Smad7 protects against or heals mouth sores commonly associated with cancer treatment.

In some cancer patients treated with radiation, the mouth sores known as oral mucositis become so severe that feeding tubes are required for nutrition and narcotics are needed for pain. In fact, 40-70 percent of patients treated with upper-body radiation develop the condition to some degree. Currently, there is no FDA approved treatment. A University of Colorado Cancer Center study published this week in the journal Nature Medicine takes an important step toward changing that.

“We developed a genetically engineered mouse that produces a protein called Smad7 in the surface layers of its mouth. With this protein expressed, mouse models were dramatically more resistant to oral mucositis than were controls,” says Xiao-Jing Wang, PhD, CU Cancer Center investigator.

Wang and collaborators including Qinghong Zhang, PhD, Yosef Refaeli, PhD, and radiation oncologist David Raben, MD, are pursuing further research with the goal of developing Smad7 as a therapeutic agent for human oral mucositis. The group joined Smad7 in with a short peptide that allows the protein to cross through cell membranes, and produced this combination protein from cultured bacteria. When they applied the engineered compound directly to the mouse oral mucosa, it was effective against the development of oral mucositis and worked to heal existing ulcers. Importantly, it revived wounded normal cells but not cancer cells, avoiding a major problem of growth factors currently used to promote the cell growth that heals ulcers.

It's very reasonable to hope that this line of research will result in a drug that patients can self-administer topically to oral mucositis sores, or use to prevent them altogether, thus significantly improving the quality of life for many cancer patients,” Wang says.

Additionally, Wang points out that the mouse model engineered to develop human-like oral mucositis in the presence of radiation treatment is a useful tool for studying the disease — offering opportunities to search for biomarkers and test experimental therapies.

Stub it out for the children’s sake!

Smokers are most likely to kick the habit due to the effect it has on children, according to the results of a new survey. Almost a third (30 percent) of those surveyed by the British Dental Health Foundation said they would stop smoking due to the effects it has on children. More than one in four (26 percent) said the danger of developing mouth cancer would be the reason they quit, while less than one in five (19 percent) said the risk of lung cancer.

Children are often exposed to second-hand smoke in the home and particularly cars.

Public Health Minister Anne Swaff has already called for smoking to be banned in cars carrying children on “child welfare” grounds. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of second-hand smoke and exposure increases the risk of cot death, glue ear, asthma and other respiratory diseases.

A review by the British Medical Association’s Board of Science concluded that there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke for children and adverse effects can be found at low levels of exposure.

“Children see their parents as role models. If they are smoking, children are more likely to take up the habit. By stubbing out cigarettes now, smokers are more likely to kick the habit due to the effect it has on children, according to the results of a new survey.

National award for Tyneside dental project

A ground-breaking project which delivers a dedicated dental service for children in care in North Tyneside has won a national award.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust’s initiative for looked after children in the borough has won the ‘continuity of care’ award at the Patient Experience Network (PEN) awards.

The scheme, which operates in partnership with professionals responsible for the children’s welfare and wellbeing, ensures there is no interruption in dental care for children entering care and has resulted in improvements in their oral health.

The project, run by the Trust’s Northumbria Dental Service, started as a 12-month pilot in conjunction with North Tyneside Council in 2010, however due to its success, has continued.

Community dental officer Dr Alex Rushworth, who co-ordinates the project alongside senior oral health promotion officer Jo Mackintosh, said: “We are really excited and proud to have won this award. This service was designed for the looked after children of North Tyneside with the help of the children, young people and carers themselves.

“Although Northumbria Dental Service already assessed and treated looked after children, this service means we have more robust links with everyone involved in the care of these patients. It means that more children are able to access our service and benefit from a project specifically designed to deliver health benefits to them.”

There are plans to extend the service into Northumberland.

Tobacco use is a major killer worldwide, and Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, hopes the one in three smokers in the UK that want to quit do so sooner rather than later.

Dr Carter said: “The research is clear-cut — smoking in any environment is harmful to you and those around you. Around one in six adults in the UK still smoke, and if they are doing so around their children it could have a catastrophic effect on their future health.

“Children see their parents as role models. If they are smoking, children are more likely to take up the habit. By stubbing out cigarettes now, smokers are more likely to kick the habit due to the effect it has on children, according to the results of a new survey.

BDA launches major changes to membership

For the first time, the British Dental Association (BDA) will offer dentists a choice of membership packages that reflect individuals’ different needs.

Following extensive research, the BDA is launching a new membership scheme and from 1 June 2015 the current ‘one size fits all’ membership will be replaced with three different packages, offering a range of benefits.

At the same time, the BDA is also launching a new online CPD ‘Hub’ which will be available to all members.

The new membership packages are as follows:

• Essential (£295) – covering trade union support, access to online advice, subscriptions to the BDA and BDJ News, access to the brand new online CPD system

• Extra (£795) – covering everything in Essential membership plus, tailored support and advice via phone or email, and a VIP three-day ticket to the British Dental Conference and Exhibition

• Expert (£1095) – covering everything in Essential and Extra memberships plus exclusive access to BDA Expert (including over 170 model policies and protocols); two three-day DCP tickets to the British Dental Conference and Exhibition; and a BDA Clinical Guide

Concessional rates will also be available for the following:

• Students (£24 a year while at university) — covering a range of benefits including access to e-books, BDA publications and free entry to the Conference and Exhibition

• Those over 65 (£150) — for access to the Essential membership package.
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Work in Burma with Burmadent

A chance encounter whilst on holiday in March 2012 was the starting point for UK dentistry’s newest Charity, Burmadent.

The couple were joined on the trip by the head nurse at their London practice, Zar Ni, and his wife Myat San as well as Support Manager at Burmadent has been established to provide dental care and promote oral health education in Burma.

The online portal of the UK’s largest dental exhibition has a whole host of practical features, designed to ensure you maximise your visit to BDTA Dental Showcase. Visit www.dentalshowcase.com now to:

• Register for free to benefit from BDTA Dental Showcase 2013. See what’s new in the software of Excellence and trained dental nurse, Lesley Naismith.

BDTA Dental Showcase launches new website

Registered for BDTA Dental Showcase, the UK’s largest dental exhibition, is now officially open for 2013.

Whatever your reason for attending the UK’s largest dental exhibition – to see the very latest technology, gain insight on the newest treatments, find out the latest news and updates about the exhibition – the new BDTA Dental Showcase website is the hub for everything you need!

The couple aimed to organise a return trip to Inle Lake in Burma where they found in the mouths of such young children was shocking and motivated the couple to return to the area in November last year, with the aim of providing a programme of dental care to the orphans.

More than 28 million people in the UK chose their current dentist through word of mouth, according to new research.

In a poll conducted by Bray Leino, half of people questioned (44.7 per cent) used friends and family recommendations for choosing their current dentist, while only 7.5 per cent of people used the internet. Almost two thirds (63.7 per cent of people used the internet. Almost two thirds (63.7 per cent) would rely on recommendations from friends and family to choose a new dentist.

The trust people have in their dentist was also highlighted as the survey found that two in every three people (86.5 per cent) would prefer to see the same dentist every time they visit.

Tony Reed, Executive Director of the British Dental Trade Association (BDTA) said: “New technologies have transformed the whole experience of visiting the dentist. There are now a wide range of largely non-invasive treatments including laser treatments, to target decay and disease, and digital scanning technology which allows dentists to make replacement teeth and crowns without taking silicon impressions. “Dental treatments have advanced significantly helping to make a visit to the dentist a much more relaxed experience and encouraging more patients to take care of their oral health which, in turn, benefits their overall health.”

Word of mouth strengthens oral health

BDTA Dental Showcase launches new website

GDC’s Chair and Chief Executive speak at BDA Conference

The General Dental Council’s (GDC) Chair, Kevin O’Brien and Chief Executive, Evlyne Gilvarry will be appearing at this year’s BDA Conference, taking place at London ExCeL on 25-27 April 2013.

Together they will present a session on Friday 26 April in Theatre 4 at 2.15pm, entitled Radical changes ahead – the GDC prepares for the future. In the session they will be discussing the GDC’s work, future aims and strategy; cost effective regulation; and the importance of contributing to the GDC’s work.

Kevin O’Brien will also be presenting the session: “The internet is a very powerful tool that can be used to help deliver dentistry in line with patient expectations on Friday in the Training essentials theatre at 11am. In the session, Kevin will be exploring the aims and objectives of the GDC’s corporate strategy; the role of patient expectations and safety; and how progress in key projects such as direct access, the review of standards and CPD will impact dental professionals.”

For more information about the conference and to book a place, please go to: http://conference.bda.org/