

The BDJ News section accepts items that include general news, latest research and diary events that interest our readers. Press releases or articles may be edited, and should include a colour photograph if possible.

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PUT PATIENTS FIRST AND STAY INDEPENDENT, YOUNG DENTISTS URGED

Young dentists see their future in independent practice rather than working for dental corporations, a vote at the Young Dentists conference in London revealed. Following a debate on who owns dentistry the audience of more than 200 voted overwhelmingly in favour of independent practice.

'You must be driven by the dentistry, not the finance,' Ewa Rozwadowska, an independent general dental practitioner urged the conference.

Dr Rozwadowska, who qualified in 1978, and has owned her practice in Stroud, Gloucestershire, for more than 25 years, urged delegates to consider the benefits of remaining self-employed and shaping their own futures.

'My general practice continues to be a realised, individual vision,' she said. 'We can practise beautiful, no-compromise dentistry.' It was important to develop business skills but clinical standards and relationships with patients should be paramount, she added.

Dr Rozwadowska acknowledged that PCTs would find it much easier to negotiate contracts with corporates rather than individual practices and that small practices might find it difficult to survive in future. But corporates would never have the patient loyalty possible in an independent practice, she argued.

'Corporates are set up primarily to deliver profits to shareholders. I own my own business and my life,' she said.

Speaking in favour of corporate dentistry, Darrin Robinson, head of clinical services and commissioning for Integrated Dental Holdings, said corporate employers provided high quality training and could save dentists the hassle of dealing with PCTs. His remarks coincided with the sale of IDH (see page 174).

Tim Campbell (right), winner of the first Apprentice television series in 2005, said passion, perseverance and partnership were the key to successful entrepreneurship. Campbell worked for Sir Alan



Sugar at Amstrad for two years and is now setting up a trust to help 16-30 year olds launch their own enterprises.

'Whatever you're doing, do it with passion,' said Campbell, who grew up in the East End of London and worked on London underground to pay his way through university. Campbell also urged delegates to take stock of what they had already achieved and to identify people they could learn from.

Yogesh Wadher, a vocational trainee at a practice in Brighton, said changes in the organisation of dentistry, including the new contract and the introduction of units of dental activity, made him anxious about his future. 'I love vocational training, I'm really proud to be in this profession and I love being a dentist. But I am thinking of specialising and being salaried so that I don't have to compromise,' he told the conference.



BE OPEN ABOUT CONTRACTS, PCTS TOLD

PCTs should be transparent in negotiating contracts with dentists, new guidance from the Department of Health has warned.

At present PCTs receive ring-fenced funding for commissioning dental services. But from April 2009 funding will be part of PCTs' wider budgets and it will be up to individual trusts to decide what services to spend the money on. Gross income protection for GDS dentists, introduced in 2006 as part of the government's dental reforms, will also end in April 2009. But PCTs will be expected to produce year on year improvements in the number of patients accessing NHS services, the guidance adds.

'It is very important to operate a culture of no surprises,' says the guidance, *Commissioning NHS Primary Care Dental Services: Meeting the NHS Operating Framework Objectives*. 'Contractors are entitled to know early about any proposed changes to their contracts.'

'The end of the gross income guarantee does bring greater scope to review contracts, but no compulsion to do so,' it adds.

'It is unlikely that new restrictive contracts – child only or excluding charge payers – would help establish locally comprehensive services. However, where such contracts already exist, commissioners should manage any changes in a way that protects

patients' access to NHS dental services,' the guidance adds. PCTs should implement incentives for practices who deliver 'above and beyond' the contract requirements, the guidance suggests.

Health secretary, Alan Johnson has denied being complacent about continuing problems of access to NHS dentistry. In a parliamentary debate this month (February 5) Michael Penning, Conservative MP for Hemel Hempstead, said 3 million people had no access to NHS dentistry. 'With £2.6 million of taxpayers' money being spent on NHS dentistry, and people pulling their teeth out with pliers why is the secretary of state so complacent,' he asked.

Mr Johnson replied: 'Anybody pulling their teeth out with pliers needs more medical care than a dentist can provide.'

He acknowledged 'some sluggishness' on the part of PCTs commissioning dental services, but pointed to a 25 per cent increase in dental school places and said younger dentists were more enthusiastic about 'the brave new world under this contract'.

'Although the new contract has taken time to settle down and although it was not popular with the profession we have made improvements in dental care,' he said.

He added that he would not rule out targeted funding to improve provision in areas short of dentists.

UK'S LARGEST DENTAL CORPORATE SOLD TO US BANK

Integrated Dental Holdings, the UK's largest dental chain, has been sold to US bank Merrill Lynch.

Started by dentist David Hudaly in 1996 and based in Bolton, IDH comprises 200 practices, employs 700 dentists and treats about 1.5 million NHS and private patients a year. It announced earlier this month (February 10) that Merrill Lynch Global Private Equity (MLGPE) had taken over the majority shareholding from LGV Capital.

Commenting on the sale, David Hudaly, who will continue to lead the executive team, said: 'Our focus on the NHS will continue, as we strengthen our position as preferred provider of high quality dental care. We have ambitious plans to further increase the number of dental practices and extend the range of services we offer patients.' The management team would remain committed to staff development, he said.

A statement on its website said: 'IDH is committed to expanding its services through shared investment with strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and local health boards across the UK to create new NHS dental practices and additional access for NHS dental patients.'

Eric Kump, managing director at MLGPE, said: 'We are delighted to be supporting such a dynamic and high quality company. The management team are committed to NHS dentistry, clinical excellence and staff development. We will support their plans to grow the business to better serve the dental needs of the population.'

David Hudaly started IDH with three practices in June 1996 and in three years it had acquired 100. In 2000 IDH acquired the Whitecross chain, followed by Orthoworld in July 2007.

IDH has created more than 30 new NHS dental practices and acquired 50 practices during the past four years.

It says 'the group is seeking to be the corporate choice for practice owners considering selling their practice to a corporate group.'

UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENT FOR FORMER BDA PRESIDENT

Roger Bettles has been appointed chairman of council and pro-chancellor of Leicester University. A former national president of the BDA, Mr Bettles has chaired the association's audit committee from its inception in 2005 and served on the BDA inquiry into finances.

Mr Bettles, whose whole career was in dental public health in Leicestershire, was formerly chief executive of Fosse Health trust.

He has been associated with Leicester University for several years.



LEGISLATION REDUCES SMOKING

England's anti-smoking legislation, introduced in July, has resulted in an increase in the number of people quitting, according to the Department of Health.

Between April and September last year 165,000 smokers gave up, an increase of 28 per cent on the same period for the previous year, according to statistics released last month (January).

There has also been an increase in take up of cessation services following the legislation which made public places smoke free, banned staff smoking rooms and made it illegal to sell tobacco products to people under 18.

'This is good news but there is still quite a way to go,' said Richard Watt, professor of dental public health at University College London.

'Smoking is the largest single preventable cause of death and disability in the UK and is increasingly restricted to the more disadvantaged sections of society.'



Professor Watt, who chaired the working group which produced the Department of Health's guidance, *Smoke free and smiling: helping dental patients to quit tobacco*, in May last year, said all patients should have their

smoking history checked at the start of each course of treatment and be made aware of local cessation services. 'Patients who use these services increase their chances of quitting four fold,' he said.

DEAN OF NEW SCHOOL IN WHO'S WHO

Liz Kay, inaugural dean of Peninsula Dental School, is a new entry in the 2008 edition of Who's Who. After qualifying at Edinburgh University in 1982 and completing a fellowship and PhD, she was appointed lecturer in community dental health at Glasgow University then senior lecturer in dental public health at Dundee University and senior lecturer in health services research at Manchester University. In 1998 she was appointed professor of dentistry at Manchester University.

Professor Kay, who was appointed inaugural dean of Peninsula Medical School in 2006, said she was 'amazed and honoured' at her inclusion. The author of more than 100 papers and four text books, Professor Kay has particular interests in decision analysis and health service research. Peninsula Dental School, based in Plymouth, opened to its first cohort of 64 students in September 2007, and aims to produce 'a new and very different kind of dental graduate



with a strong sense of responsibility to society,' said Professor Kay.

Other new entrants this year are: Brian Avery, dental dean at the Royal College of Surgeons of England; Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft; Cynthia Pine, dental dean, Liverpool University and William Saunders, dean of dentistry at Dundee University.

NEW PAEDIATRIC PROFESSOR

Marie Therese Hosey has been appointed professor of paediatric dentistry at King's College London Dental Institute. She will be taking up her post on April 1.

Currently reader and honorary consultant in paediatric dentistry at Glasgow Dental School, Dr Hosey has also held appointments in Northampton, Dudley, Birmingham, and Washington, DC, US. She qualified from Glasgow University in 1985 and completed her MSc and postgraduate degrees there.

Dr Hosey said of her new role: 'It's a real opportunity to expand my research interest in dental sedation, and to further develop paediatric dental services for high caries risk and socially deprived children, and particularly those with dental anxieties and facial deformities.'

DIARY

FEBRUARY

BDA Tender Training Workshop

Date: 28-29 February 2008

Venue: BDA London

t.parsons@bda.org

MARCH

Developing your practice

Date: 7 March 2008

Venue: BDA, London

www.bda.org/events

BDA seminar: Setting up in practice

Date: 14 March 2008

Venue: Holiday Inn Liverpool City Centre

www.bda.org/events

Safeguarding Children in Dentistry

Date: 14 March 2008

Venue: Royal College of Surgeons of England

www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds/courses/fds

Scottish Dental Practice-Based Research Network National Symposium Soft tissue management and research in dental primary care

Date: 13 March 2008

Venue: Frankland Building, Dundee University

Details: Gill Ramsay, Tel: 01382 420107
g.ramsay@chs.dundee.ac.uk

British Society for the Study of Prosthetic Dentistry Annual Conference

Date: 15-18 March 2008

Venue: Exeter Thistle Hotel

michael.fenlon@kcl.ac.uk

GRADUATES SHOULD NOT EXPECT UK JOBS, DEAN WARNS

Future dental graduates should not expect to automatically find jobs in the UK, Richard Hayward, dean of the faculty of general dental practice has warned.

Speaking at an open day at the FGDP (UK) he said the increase in dental school places, combined with an increasing number of dentists coming from abroad, would result in fewer jobs for UK graduates.

'There will be 1,000 dentists who are not working in the UK by 2011,' he said.

Doctors were already facing competition for jobs and that trend was likely to spread. 'We haven't seen that in dentistry yet but we will,' he said.

Government claims that the dental reforms had improved services were not backed by evidence, he added.

Earlier this month health secretary, Alan Johnson told the House of Commons that there had been a 20 per cent increase in the number of dentists since 1997. Combined with the 25 per cent expansion of undergraduate places, and the opening of new dental schools in Plymouth last year and Preston later this year, this would do 'an awful lot to resolve the problems.'

'The new contract was the best way forward,' he said.

NO CONTRIVED LIMITS ON USE OF NHS LOGO, SAYS BDA

A Department of Health proposal to limit the use of the NHS logo to practices where two thirds of patients are NHS, has been opposed by the BDA.

The consultation document, *NHS Identity Scheme for Dental Practices*, published in October, proposed that the use of the logo on practice signs and stationery should be allowed 'only where a provider meets certain criteria that demonstrate a high level of commitment to the NHS'. The key national indicator, it suggested, would be at least two thirds of patients receiving NHS services.

The document also suggested other requirements for use of the logo, including opening hours of at least 35 hours a week and services for all types of patients – adults, children, fee-paying

and charge exempt. It also suggested significant investment in premises for the use of NHS patients and 'positive attitude towards local commissioning of primary dental services.'

In its response the BDA opposed the proposal as 'inappropriate' and extremely difficult to measure. 'The BDA disagrees strongly with the proposal that dental practices be required to meet contrived requirements in order to be able to display the NHS brand,' it said. 'Any practice that holds an NHS contract should automatically be considered fit for purpose and allowed to advertise that fact.'

The BDA response criticised the proposals as a missed opportunity to encourage dentists providing NHS services.

EXTRA VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHEME LAUNCHED

The BDA has launched a new scheme to help young dentists who have completed vocational training prepare for life in practice.

The scheme, entitled VT Advance, will be free to participants, who will be based in dental practice with a dedicated trainer, and assured a minimum income of £35,000 a year, plus a training programme.

Participants, to be known as vocational associates, will be taken on a full-time basis, working four and a half days a week. The remaining half day

will be set aside for project work, online group discussions and review meetings with the trainer. There will be 12 study days throughout the year.

The study days will cover topics such as implants, treatment planning, cosmetic dentistry, endodontics, advanced prosthetics, career options, communication skills, audit, leadership and management and handling complaints.

For the year August 2008-July 2009 the BDA will be running two schemes, one in London, led by Dr Parima Patel

and one in the West Midlands, led by Dr Graham Stokes. Each scheme will have 12-15 participating practices and the same number of VT associates.

Peter Ward, chief executive of the BDA, said: 'This is about preparing young dentists for life in practice.'

Participating practices will pay a membership fee of £350 a month, but can expect to benefit from the income generated by the vocational associate.

The closing date for applications to become a trainer in the scheme is March 31.