

## News and views

Editor: Clare Ketley

### NSPCC child protection initiative

The UK based charity, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), has launched a new initiative – the EduCare Child Protection Awareness in Health programme. Its aim is to raise awareness of child protection in healthcare professionals involved in childcare, all of whom are considered to have a responsibility to recognize and report suspected child abuse and to support families under stress. It is a distance learning programme covering topics including good practice principles and their role in protecting children, how to recognize signs of abuse and what to do in cases of concern about a child. By improving awareness in this way it is anticipated that communication between staff on child abuse concerns will improve, something which is crucial in building a complete picture of what is happening to a child.

The programme is very flexible and may be completed at work or at home at a pace to suit the individual participant.

Further information is available from EduCare on 01926 436219.

### UK water fluoridation

#### *Background*

In December 2002 Andy Burnham, Labour MP for Leigh, tabled an Early Day Motion calling for an amendment to the Water Bill that would *require* water companies to fluoridate supplies where health authorities have demonstrated that there is strong local support. His motion was signed by 146 MPs.

In July 2002 the Government proposed its own amendment to the Water Bill then being considered in the House of Lords. Peers supported the Government's amendment by a convincing 153–31, and the amendment was incorporated into the Bill as Clause 61. The House of Commons Committee considering the Water Bill then voted 14–6 in favour of this clause.

MPs subsequently had a free vote on the fluoridation clause in November 2003. The clause was designed for targeted water fluoridation schemes

with local communities being able to decide for themselves whether or not they wanted it. Andy Burnham led the debate in favour of the clause arguing that MPs had a 'once-in-a-generation opportunity to pass legislation that will have a rapid effect on the nation's health, particularly in the most deprived communities'. Conservative MP and practising dentist Paul Beresford urged MPs 'to recognize that, in trying to teach adults and children in a country where there is less than one toothbrush per person, we need fluoride to take the initial step'.

#### *Water Bill: fluoridation clause vote*

The clause was passed by a 2–1 majority of MPs, ensuring that in future, water companies will be *required* to fluoridate the supply when requested to do so by a strategic health authority following public consultation.

This long-awaited change in legislation will undoubtedly be greeted warmly by the dental profession, and in particular, paediatric dentists working in those areas where dental health is poor.

### Childhood obesity: move to ban adverts

There is growing awareness around the world of the problem of obesity, in particular that affecting children, which according to the WHO is reaching epidemic proportions. Hand in hand with childhood obesity arising from poor diet is poor dental health, also arising from poor diet.

The food industry and its marketing practices have received much publicity in this respect, not only as major contributors to the problem but also being an essential part of the solution. Food marketing and celebrity endorsements of unhealthy snacks have been heavily criticised by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in the UK. Of particular concern is the fact that childhood obesity due to poor nutrition is threatening life expectancy, which has fallen for the first time in 50 years.

The FSA has launched a discussion paper on the subject and will be making policy recommendations to the Government later in the year. It is hoped that one of the outcomes of this will be a ban on the

advertising of unhealthy food and drink during pre-school children's television programmes. Although the main aim of the ban would be to reduce obesity it would certainly have a knock-on effect of reducing dental caries in young children and therefore should receive support from paediatric and public health dentists alike.

### **BSPD Conference 2004**

The National Conference of the Society will be held this year in Belfast, between Thursday 16th and Saturday 18th September. The venue is to be the Ramada Hotel, a superior hotel situated at Shaw's Bridge, in the Lagan Valley Regional Park, about three miles from the City Centre.

The first keynote speaker will be Terry Gregg, who will describe the process of setting up a digital surgery. Otherwise, the main themes of the conference will be Cleft Palate and Trauma. Two of our main speakers will be Dave Kenny and Ed Barrett from Toronto, and we look forward to the international flavour they will bring. As always, we will be seeking entries for the *Poster Presentation*, *Clinical Case Presentation* and the *Young Researcher's* prizes.

We intend to have a strong social programme. On the Thursday evening there will be a drinks reception and dinner at Stormont, the home of the Northern Ireland Assembly. This will include a musical programme from Samantha Newbold, a previous 'Young Musician of the Year', and friends. Later on there will be the competition for the much coveted 'Angel of the North' trophy. On Friday, the Conference Dinner will be followed by dancing. Apparently, it was noticed in New Orleans that many BSPD members enjoyed dancing.

There will be a programme for accompanying persons, tailor made for those who may attend. This could include golf for anyone interested. We will also arrange a postconference programme for anyone enthusiastic enough to stay an extra day.

In the past, it has proved difficult to persuade people to come to Belfast. However, if booked early enough, flights from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Newcastle, Luton, Bristol and some other airports can be very cheap, especially when compared to rail fares. We would be delighted if you would consider this opportunity to come to this under-visited part of the world.

For further details contact: Norman Campbell, Dental Department, Belfast City Hospital, Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7AB, E-mail: [norman.campbell@bch.n-i.nhs.uk](mailto:norman.campbell@bch.n-i.nhs.uk)

### **Announcement**

#### **The 4th Conference of the Pediatric Dentistry Association of Asia**

Happy Child Through Oral Health  
23–24 September 2004, Bangkok

#### *PRE-CONGRESS LECTURE*

*Traumatic Injuries: what's new in this millennium*  
Professor J.O. Andreasen

22 September 2004, Shangri-La Hotel, Bangkok  
Pre-congress course registration fee (includes lunch and 2 coffee breaks). Pre-registration: USD 100. PDAA delegates: USD 80. On-site registration: USD 120.  
Pre-registration deadline 15 July 2004  
Late registration by 15 September 2004  
Visit us at: [www.pdaa2004.com](http://www.pdaa2004.com)  
E-mail: [pdaathailand@chula.ac.th](mailto:pdaathailand@chula.ac.th)

#### **Dental Sedation Teachers Group [www.dstg.co.uk](http://www.dstg.co.uk)**

*Teaching Challenges for Changing Times*  
Tuesday 11th May 2004  
Foresight Centre, University of Liverpool

This year's symposium will consider the challenges we face in teaching advanced and paediatric sedation techniques and also the barriers, which are still present, in basic sedation training.

There will be an opportunity to consider the issues raised in Training in Safe Practice in Advanced Sedation Techniques for Adult Patients: A Discussion Paper (DSTG June 2003). This meeting will be of interest to everyone involved in the teaching of sedation at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

For application forms contact  
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Registration  
Members £55 Non members £65  
Cheques payable to DSTG

The meeting is open to DSTG members and non-members. Eligible non-members will be offered one years free membership.

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