Heraeus acquires majority in Korean dental dealer

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

HONG KONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: The dental division of the German Heraeus Group is reinforcing its market position in Asia. As part of a capital increase, the company recently acquired a majority shareholding in Huden, a South Korean dental dealer based in Seoul. The acquisition, which will focus on the sale of materials and equipment for restorative and implant procedures, gives Heraeus direct access to customers in one of the fastest growing dental markets in Asia.

Founded in 1851, family-owned Heraeus has been active in business sectors such as industrial precious metals, sensors, quartz glass and biomaterials. Its dental division, which includes casting materials, composites, alloys and ceramics, reported a turnover of €288 million in 2009.

Company officials told Dental Tribune that the capital increase was decided upon by shareholders earlier this year, and will be used to extend Huden’s sales and distribution team in the short and mid-term. In addition, Heraeus aims to extend cooperation with local thought leaders and universities to advance product approvals and enhance brand recognition in the country. The company aims to double its current market share in the next few years.

The financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

EMS device targets sub-gingival biofilm

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LEIPZIG, Germany: The Swiss-based company EMS is now offering its latest portable Perio handpiece Air-Flow handy Perio to dentists in the Asia Pacific region. The device, which is based on the company’s award-winning Air-Flow Master and Air-Flow handy 2+ series, was developed for rapid removal of biofilm from the sub-gingival area. It comes with a single-use Perio nozzle for easy access to pockets of up to 10 mm and the air-polishing powder Air-Flow powder Perio.

According to some studies, sub-gingival biofilm is one of the main factors that contribute to the growing number of peri-implantitis cases amongst dental implant patients. To prevent the penetration of the sub-gingival area with bacteria and microbes, the human body triggers a bone deterioration process as an “emergency response”, which can cause dental implants to fail. As sub-gingival biofilm efficiently protects bacteria against pharmaceuticals, conventional treatment with antibiotics is very difficult. EMS says that their new handpiece provides clinicians with an ergonomic solution that offers complete removal of the biofilm even on implant surfaces and without damaging the cement or the tooth.

The Air-Flow handy Perio device is available in white. It will be available through EMS and through the company’s local dealers in Asia.

Correction

In Dental Tribune Asia Pacific No 5 Vol. 8, the interview titled “Dental caries is … not easily prevented or treated in the most susceptible children” on pages 15/16 mistated the surname of an interviewee. The correct surname is Lim, not Kim.

In Dental Tribune Asia Pacific No 6 Vol. 8, the article “Articulating and functional restorations with Panasil impression materials” on pages 15/16 mistated that he authors were DTI editors. Dr Ugo Torquati Gotti and and Giancarlo Riva are freelance authors and not affiliated with Dental Tribune International.
Malaysian govt admits to public health crisis

The government of Malaysia has released new figures that underline a significant shortage in the country’s public health care sector. Speaking to senators at a parliamentary question time in August, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Rosnah Rashid Shirlin said new figures show that an average of 360 medical officers have resigned from public service annually since 2005.

Malaysia currently faces a shortage of 5,000 physicians and dentists, a situation that has left thousands of patients in rural areas especially without access to affordable health or dental health care.

The Deputy Health Minister promised to seek keeping officers in public service through various initiatives, including the increase of medical, dentistry and pharmacy graduates in the public service. She added that the government is also planning to provide more career development opportunities for public officers and to improve their incentives and allowances.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Health considered extending the compulsory public service for doctors to five or ten years from the current three. Since 1971, doctors in Malaysia have been required to serve with the government.

Asian bug causes trouble worldwide

The emergence of a bacteria-resistant genetic mutation in Asia and other countries poses a significant threat to global health, a multinational team of researchers has reported. According to their study, published in the current issue of *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, evidence of increased prevalence of New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase (NDM-1), an enzyme that makes bacteria resistant to antibiotics, was detected in *Enterobacteriaceae* isolated in India, Pakistan and the UK. The researchers called for co-ordinated international surveillance of the enzyme to prevent its spread through medical and dental tourism.

NDM-1, which was first identified by UK Prof. Tim Walsh in a hospital in India last year, has been found to be resistant to a wide range of antibiotics, including penicillin and amoxicillin, which are commonly used after dental procedures. In addition, it also affects the efficiency of carbapenems, a group of antibiotics reserved for use in emergencies when other antibiotics have failed.

Prof. Walsh told the magazine *New Scientist* that due to travelling and medical tourism throughout the region, bacterial mutations like NDM-1 increasingly find their way into other countries. He said the gene, which was rarely observed just a few years ago, is now to be found in between 1 and 3 per cent of all *Enterobacteriaceae*-involved infections. Mutated genes have recently been isolated in the US, Sweden, Turkey, Israel, Greece and the UK, he said.

Infectious disease experts in the US and the UK have warned clinicians to be aware of the possibility of NDM-1-producing bacteria in patients who have received medical care in India and Pakistan. They should also specifically enquire about this risk factor when carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae* are identified.