US election results not favoured by dentists
Seventy per cent think a McCain presidency would have been better for the profession

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LEIPZIG, Germany/NAN FRAN-CISCO, CA, USA: According to a recent survey, US dentists might be disappointed by the Democratic win in the US elections last month. Two out of three dentists surveyed in a poll by dental practice marketing resource The Healthy Dentist said that former Republican nominee John Mc- Cain would be a better president for dentists. One in six favoured Obama, while the remainder said there would be no difference be- tween the two.

Illinois Senator Barack Obama won the recent US presidential election against John McCain by 565 to 173 votes. He will take office from incumbent president George W. Bush in January next year. In a Democrat radio address in November, he announced the development of a plan that will create 2.5 million jobs by 2011—“a plan big enough to meet the chal- lenges we face that I intend to sign into law.”

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Many poor and lower-middle-class families in the US do not receive adequate care, in part because most dentists want cus- tomers who can pay in cash or have private insurance. The lack of dental care is also not restricted to the poor and their children, re- cent data show. Experts on oral health say that about 100 million Americans have no access to care.

Most dentists, however, be- lieve that a Republican would have been better for the economy. “Due to higher taxes by Obama, there will be less money to spend on dentistry,” griped a Louisiana dentist. “Obama will be a disas- ter, raising costs for employers and decreasing patient service,” agreed a New Jersey dentist. “There will be less elective cos- metic services as the economy goes downhill!”

Dentists were concerned about tax issues. “Obama is a classic Robin Hood Democrat: tax the people who work to create wealth, and redistribute it to the masses,” said a Florida dentist. “The last thing I need is higher taxes,” said a California periodontist.

Australia, NZ consider fluoridation

BARTON, Australia/WELLING- TON, New Zealand: Australia and New Zealand are consider- ing approving the voluntary ad- dition of fluoride to bottled water. Reports went public after Coca- Cola Amatil and the Australian Dental Association quarrelled over a print advertising camp- aign that was adding fur to par- ents’ fears about the negative ef- fects of soft drink consumption on their children.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand has now released a report for public comment that proposes amending, the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. Should the organisation approve the sale of bottled water contain- ing added fluoride, it will be a vol- untary permission allowing man- ufacturers to add fluoride under the conditions of the Codex.

More nurses for Malaysia

Malaysia has signed a MOU with 24 institutions in the country, in which these institutions agree to use Ministry of Health facilities for nursing, dental, and health sciences education programmes. Through the agreement, the min- istry hopes to improve the nurse/ patient ratio to 1 : 200 by 2015.

Bad breath linked to cancer

New research from Japan has found that the bacterium Helico- bacter pylori, a main cause of stomach ulcers and cancer, lives in the mouths of some people who have bad breath but no signs of stomach illness. The bacterium is carried by over 90 per cent of peo- ple in the developing world.

Bill Gates has warned rich countries to cut back spending on health aid. Here he holds a child during a visit to India in September 2008. Photo: AFP/Circenot via NEWS, page 17

Barack Obama was not dentists’ first choice for US presidency. Photo: Mitti Ebenezer.

Schools in India and Japan cooperate

CHENNAI, India: With in- creased trade talks between In- dia and Japan, the Sri Ramachan- dra University (SRU) in Chennai, India, has announced the signing of a collaboration agreement with the Kyushu Dental College in Japan. The agreement in- cludes the exchange of person- nel between the two universities as well as the sharing of scientific results, a SRU press release an- nounced.

Prof. Hosokawa, Head of the Department of Prosthodontics at Kyushu Dental College, said his department was currently con- ducting research in oral hygiene index profiling, bone biology, and computer-guided surgery, among others, in which the stu- dents and research scholars from SRU will be able to participate. Prof. Thyagarajan, Director Chief Advisor of Research at SRU, added that the agreement will help in launching joint research projects in vital areas.