Health experts go cuckoo over mental patients

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DTI

HONGKONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: People with psychiatric disorders are more likely to suffer from dental diseases than people who are mentally stable, a new report from Australia suggests.

Having reviewed over 20 studies from Europe, Asia and the US, researchers from the University of Queensland (UQ) found that patients diagnosed with severe mental illnesses had a three-fold higher risk of losing all their teeth.

Mental patients also had significantly more decayed, filled or missing teeth, the study shows.

Levels of dental disease however were lower in countries or regions with water fluoridation.

According to the study, treating mental disorders like anxiety, insomnia and depression or anger can cost as much as US$394 billion a year, including costs for dental treatments.

“People with psychiatric disorders are more likely to suffer from dental diseases than people who are mentally stable,” said lead researcher Steve Kisely.

He added that medication commonly used to treat disorders, such as antidepressants or mood stabilisers, can additionally reduce saliva flow, which can cause xerostomia and increase plaque formation in these patients.

“Patients with severe mental illnesses like schizophrenia, dementia or bipolar disorders are most affected by bad oral health,” he told Dental Tribune Asia Pacific.

Conversely, Kisely said that dental diseases can lead to mental disorders like social phobia caused by the poor anaesthetic appearance of teeth or other symptoms, like bad breath.

He recommended including oral health check-lists in the standard assessment of psychiatric patients and increasing promotion of oral hygiene measures amongst mental patients.

The alarming figures were released on the same day that new findings from Germany revealed that almost 40 per cent of Europeans suffer from some kind of mental health problem.

According to the study, treating disorders like anxiety, insomnia or depression costs the Union an estimated US$594 billion a year, including costs for dental treatment.

Managing bone with Acteon

The Thailand subsidiary of French dental manufacturer Acteon has announced to hold a seminar and workshop on the issue of bone management next January in Bangkok, Thailand.

The seminar will be joined by Drs Fred Bergmann and Safari Vissudvat-tanakorn as well as Prof. Furumida Watanabe and Lars Sennerby. [Image]

New light on oral leukoplakia

Chemical luminescence can aid in the visualisation of oral leukoplakia, new research has found.

Following oral examinations, researchers at King’s College London Dental Institute evaluated the accuracy of chemiluminescence in detecting potentially malignant oral disorders using a commercially available detection kit. [Image]

Australia sets up dental council

Dental experts have been gathered by the Australian coalition to form a new advisory body on oral health.

The National Advisory Council on Dental Health, which includes the President of the Australian Dental Association, as well as heads of other national oral health organisations, is intended to develop strategies to improve the country’s poor public dental care system.

The decision to set up the council follows an agreement on the improvement of public dental services signed by Labor and the Green party during last year’s federal elections.

Both coalition partners already clashed over the issue in early May, which resulted in additional funding of AU$55 million (US$56 million) for dental care by the government over the next four years.

Public dental services, especially in South Australia, are poor, with patients having to wait for months or even years to get a dentist appointment.

Fiji has eyes on people’s oral health

A new oral health survey is being conducted by the Fiji Ministry of Health to re-evaluate the prevalence of dental diseases on the island.

Over the next few weeks, dental checks will be conducted on and questionnaires distributed to 6,000 individuals from different parts of the country in collaboration with the Fiji National University and the Fiji Ministry of Health.

Surveying damage caused by the earthquake/tsunami in Japan. In an exclusive interview, AmsaCare’s Elia Gudchin talks about restoring dental care facilities in DTI/Photo AmeriCares/Tammy Allen, USA] [TRENDS & APPLICATIONS, page 14/15

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