

# Dental news

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.

Please direct your correspondence to the News Editor, Arveen Bajaj at the BDJ, The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW or by email to [a.bajaj@nature.com](mailto:a.bajaj@nature.com)

NEWS

## VACCINE TO TREAT GUM DISEASE ON THE WAY

Australian researchers have announced they have developed a vaccine to treat periodontitis. Following more than ten years of research, scientists from The University of Melbourne and biopharmaceutical company CSL Limited, working together at the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Oral Health Science, have identified candidate vaccine antigens for periodontitis.

'Periodontitis is a serious disease and dentists face a major challenge in treating it, because most people will not know they have the disease until it is too late and the infection has progressed to advanced stages. Traditional treatment for the disease often involves scaling and cleaning and even surgery in an effort to contain the bacterial infection' said Professor Eric Reynolds, AO and CEO of the CRC for Oral Health

Science and the Head of the University of Melbourne's Dental School.

The new vaccine approach targets the 'ring leader' of a group of pathogenic bacteria that cause periodontitis, the bacterium *Porphyromonas gingivalis*. 'We are very excited about this novel approach to the disease,' said Professor Reynolds. 'It will provide dentists and patients with a specific treatment which prevents disease progression, rather than managing its symptoms and damaging consequences.'

The vaccine development programme involves identifying the bacterial peptides and proteins that trigger the immune response, and using these as the basis of vaccines.

The vaccines are being trialled in mouse models of periodontal disease and following a positive response, a vaccine will progress to clinical trials.



## BDA LOOKS FORWARD TO STEELE PROGRESS

The BDA is looking forward to progress on the reform on general dental services in England and Wales, following news that the first steps in the process of piloting the conclusions of Professor Jimmy Steele's Review of NHS dentistry in England have been taken.

Working groups concentrating on different facets of the piloting process have now been established. According to John Milne, Chair of the BDA's General Dental Practice Committee, the news is evidence of concrete progress towards much-needed reform of NHS dentistry.

Dr Milne said, 'Professor Steele's review received broad support from

both the profession and patient groups, as well as from across the political spectrum. The beginning of the piloting process is an important step forward and we must now see sustained progress. What is important now is that the Department continues to engage with the profession on the pilots.'

Outlining his priorities for 2010, Dr Milne has also warned that the issues with the current contract must not be forgotten, and pledged continued BDA support for members affected by them.

'It is important that the profession is fully engaged with the Department as

we seek a better future for NHS dentistry,' Dr Milne said, 'but we must also remember the problems dentists across England and Wales are facing with the current arrangements. Issues such as goodwill will remain firmly on the agenda for our discussions with Government.'

Dr Milne also issued a fresh warning about the potential problems for practitioners opting to sign the PDS+ contracts being used in tenders by some primary care trusts, warning that the possibilities of breaching such contracts are rife and urging any practitioner considering such a contract to think very carefully and take professional advice before doing so.