

# Volunteers help refugees understand the importance of oral health

British Red Cross volunteers have received 'dental champion' training to help them promote good oral health among refugees.

With messages based around affordability and accessibility of dental care, the session was delivered at the charity's Plymouth refugee support centre by BDS Dental Surgery students from Plymouth University Peninsula School of Dentistry.

The event saw students explain how good toothpaste need not cost the earth, as long as it contains fluoride, and that making time for teeth is an important part of a healthy lifestyle.



Volunteers were also given tips and goody bags to share with clients.

The session took place as part of the students' Inter-Professional Engagement module – which the University runs on its BDS Dental Surgery and BSc Dental Therapy and Hygiene programmes in partnership with Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE) and community engagement charity, Well Connected.

Second-year dental student Ellis Pheasant, who helped deliver the session, said: 'We're really pleased that the volunteers were so engaged, and hope the session has given them the knowledge to offer oral health advice to refugees and asylum seekers who really need it.'



## Melinda and Melinda

H. S. Brand of the Academic Centre for Dentistry Amsterdam, and movie buff, continues his new series of columns on films featuring dentists with *Melinda and Melinda*, directed by Woody Allen (2004).

This movie has two parallel story lines, one which develops tragically and one with a happy ending. In both, a couple tries to match their divorced friend Melinda to a dentist. In the first story the dentist is a widower with a daughter. He has a very successful dental practice in Manhattan. The couple think he's lonely because he's taken ads in the personal columns and considered him a good catch. When the dentist meets Melinda at a party, he tells her that he likes to hike in the mountains and that it has been really tough on his daughter and how he wants to make her happy and educate herself. Then his beeper goes off and he asks Melinda to excuse him, because he has to contact his daughter's new babysitter.

In the other story the husband has some reservations about introducing Melinda to the dentist: 'Wasn't he full of himself, though? Kind of an unjustified self-confidence?' His wife opposes: 'He's a very rich dentist. He's cultivated and athletic. He's gorgeous-looking.' Her husband does not agree: 'Gorgeous dentist is an oxymoron.'

A few days later broad smiling dentist Greg picks up Melinda and the couple in his Bentley. They drive to Greg's huge house in the Hamptons, filled with hunting trophies. Greg explains that he goes twice a year to Africa where he shot all those trophies. After saying goodbye in the evening, the husband, who clearly dislikes the dentist, concludes: 'I wouldn't let that guy fill my teeth. I mean, anyone who gets his jollies putting holes in animals... The Ernest Hemingway of the root canal set.' A few moments later the couple hear Melinda screaming. They run to her next door apartment while the husband assumes that Greg is trying to rape Melinda. 'Probably put Novocaine in her margarita.' However, it turns out that Melinda has a tick on her leg, and Greg already left because his beeper went off for some kind of emergency.

In both stories, Melinda does not fall for the dentist, but for a musician instead.

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## Help inform future pay awards

The Scottish Government would like to invite dentists to participate in an exercise to help inform future pay awards for general dental practitioners. At present the Scottish Government does not have enough information to help it calculate the expenses element of the pay award.

Readers may be aware that in recent

years the independent Doctors' and Dentists' Pay Review Body (DDRB) have also said that they do not have enough information. In light of this the Scottish Government is introducing an annual expenses programme from 2018. Practices will be asked to complete a simple online accounts template using information that is readily available

in practice accounts. This will allow the Scottish Government to build up a picture of trends in expenses over time and help to inform the pay award. From the middle of April practices that are eligible to participate will receive an email from the ScotXed team with instructions on how to take part in the exercise.