



# Newsletter and Update: Jan 2009

## Dental Implant Clinic, Darlington.

**Dear colleague,**

I hope that you will be able to find the time to read our annual newsletter which aims to bring you up to date with how we work and operate the clinic here in Hurworth. As you will see – for the vast majority of referred patients (but not quite all) our free consultation policy remains unaltered.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to those of you who continue to support the clinic with referrals and personal recommendations. Finally, I would like to wish you all a very prosperous, successful and happy new year.

- Simon Allum.

### **Synopsis: 2008.**

2008 was another busy year - not just in terms of clinical output. Notable events included the publication of two substantial peer reviewed papers in professional journals – each on very different aspects of dental implant therapy. The first\* concerns the role of CT scanning and CAD/CAM reconstructions for “same-day teeth” fixed bridge protocols in the treatment of fully edentulous patients. The second\*\* presents the results of team research into implant design that I headed in collaboration with the Dental and the Engineering Departments of Sheffield University.

On the lecturing front, presentations were well received and attended, particularly the CPELS program which I delivered in March at the James Cooke Hospital in Middlesborough. This included an update for GDPs on the management of patients who are receiving (or have received) Bisphosphonate drugs, either in tablet form (principally for the treatment of Osteoporosis) or by Intravenous infusion (principally for the treatment of malignant bony metastases). There was also a further presentation on treatment options and associated protocols for dental implant therapy in fully edentulous patients. This program was subsequently repeated in April at a smaller event at The Station in Richmond, North Yorkshire.

As well as publishing my own work, I also continued as a scientific reviewer for both the **British Dental Journal (BDJ)** and also the **International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Implants (IJOMI)** – posts which seem set to continue throughout this coming year.

**\*April 2008: British Dental Journal** Vol 204; 7:377-381. Immediately loaded full-arch provisional implant restorations using CAD/CAM and guided placement: Maxillary and mandibular case reports: **SR Allum**

**\*\*June 2008: Clinical Oral Implants Research**; 19: 553-559. The impact of Loads on Standard Diameter, Small Diameter and Mini Implants: A comparative laboratory Study: **SR Allum et al.**

## **Protocol for referred patients**

The clinic continues to offer *a free initial consultation* to all patients who are referred to discuss the possibility of fitting dental implants as part of their overall treatment plan. All we ask is for a short note from you as the referring dentist. Additional background information is always welcome but not a strict requirement for referral. **Patients are not encouraged to self-refer, and we therefore charge an initial consultation fee of £95 if they wish to by-pass our referral system.**

**Having received a referral letter from the GDP** (or the required payment in self-referred cases), the patient is then posted an information pack. This pack includes our current information brochure which itself contains an up-to-date fees guide. The covering letter also informs the patient of their allocated referral number and invites them to contact the clinic to book their consultation quoting this number.

Patients cannot normally book consultations without a referral number. This system aims to ensure that patients have (hopefully) already had some discussion about their range of treatment options with their own dentist (if a referred case), and have at least received some basic information from us about dental implant treatment and an indication of the level of fees that might be incurred. This protocol also helps establish appropriate lines of communication with the patient's GDP.

Every year there are a number of patients who are referred to us by the GDP for advice but do not take up the offer of booking a consultation. We check through our files periodically to identify "inactive" referrals. These cases then generate a pro-forma letter from us to the referring GDP to inform them of the situation.

**Please feel free to ring or email us if you require any information about the planning, progress or management of any of your referred patients.**

## **“Rescue” and “Dental Tourism” cases**

We cannot agree to see every patient who requests a consultation to sort out problems arising from implant treatment which is underway or has been completed elsewhere. Whilst many patients probably receive good treatment if/when they travel abroad, there is unfortunately a steady drip of patients making enquiries with us about problems which have arisen under such circumstances. This may be due to poor planning, surgical or prosthetic complications and/or poor performance of cheap or “replica” implant systems. These patients are often then faced with difficult and upsetting dilemmas which can demand the need for very significant amounts of surgery time to try to sort things out. Patients with problems should be encouraged to return to the original implant provider wherever possible.

In order to help deal with this growing issue last year we introduced a new document (**PRE IMP 1**) that we usually send out to patients on receipt of a request for an opinion and/or help. This document itself requests further basic information about the case from the patient before we consider whether it is appropriate to offer a consultation at our own clinic. It also explains that it may be necessary for them to acquire a copy of the original case notes to allow us to ascertain specific details of the implant system and the components that have been used in their own treatment. It also explains that there is likely to be an initial consultation fee of up to £150.

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