Welcome to the SDPBRN Newsletter

Scottish Dental Practice Based Research Network (SDPBRN) welcomes you to their 5th issue newsletter. This issue has a new look but is still packed with Network news. Read on to find out more about our recent visitors from the USA and Norway, updates on our Rapid Evaluation Practitioners’ involvement and much more. Don’t forget to let us know your views.

Professor Jan Clarkson, SDPBRN Director

Upcoming SDPBRN events:

REPs Training Day
Date: 14 November 2013
Location: Dundee Dental Education Centre
SDPBRN Symposium Spring 2014
Remote & Rural Fellows training day Spring 2014
For more information please contact SDPBRN@nes.scot.nhs.uk

News from International Practice Based Research Networks

March 2013 saw a visit from members of the Public Dental Health Service Competence Centre of Tromoso, Northern Norway. Doctor Nils Oscarson and Professor Ivar Espelid visited Dundee Dental Education Centre (DDEC) to meet with researchers from SDPBRN to find out more about current activities within dental practice based research in Scotland.

Doctor Oscarson and Professor Espelid were visiting as representatives of the Norwegian government to explore potential strategies for taking forward the development of a Norwegian dental practice based research network. They were keen to discuss SDPBRN’s experience of establishing and developing a network in Scotland. In particular they were interested in SDPBRN’s organisation and infrastructure, communication between researchers and general practitioners funding sources, and to hear more about the range of activities SDPBRN supports.

Researchers from the SDBPRN team provided some background and an overview of SDPBRN activities, including some of the challenges and successes experienced over the last 15 years. They also gave examples of general practitioner research, PhD projects and clinical trials all of which have been supported and facilitated by the network. They concluded the visit with a tour of DDEC and the University of Dundee Dental School, providing an opportunity for our Norwegian visitors to meet with others working in collaboration with SDPBRN.

The meeting was both interesting and enjoyable and has hopefully provided a good backdrop to encourage similar activities in Norway. It is anticipated there may be opportunities for collaboration in the future and to build links with the newly established Norwegian network.

And from across the pond...

I had the pleasure of visiting one of the big global proponents of the PB RNs in the quaint and beautiful city of Dundee - the Scottish Dental PBRN. I have been involved with the United States Dental PBRN since it was first established in 2005.

During that time I’ve had the pleasure of meeting and sharing the stage with Professor Jan Clarkson at the American Dental Association’s annual Evidence-Based Dentistry (EBD) Champion conference. This has given us the chance to promote EBD and offers an opportunity to showcase the PBRN activities. Luckily, I did not immediately follow Professor Clarkson after she wowed the audience as the keynote lecture. But after that performance, when I had the opportunity to vacation in the UK, my first stop was naturally to visit SDPBRN first hand.

I was anxious to learn of all the exciting SDPBRN projects and see how they handle the similar challenges we have in the US, of getting studies off paper and into the field. It was exciting to see all the people involved with our endeavor and compare notes with my colleagues across the pond. I wasn’t disappointed as SDPBRN rolled out the red carpet.

However, next time I would like to check out Dundee’s famous marmalade.

I also stopped by the Royal College of Surgeon’s dental history exhibit in Edinburgh before ending my 2-week sojourn in the UK by visiting Dominic Hurst, teacher of EBD at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry. I felt this completed the circle from seeing where dentistry began at the exhibit in the Royal College to where we are going with SPBRN in the north, ending in London with EBD and Dominic. I wasn’t able to visit but in the middle is the Cochrane Oral Health Group in Manchester. What an impressive corridor devoted to improving oral health!

Paul Benjamin
Dental PBRN, Alabama

New Guidance Consultation

SDCEP is keen to receive feedback on draft guidance entitled ‘Prevention and Treatment of Periodontal Diseases’ which is currently available for consultation. Visit www.sdcep.org.uk
Rapid Evaluation Practitioner (REP) programme

The Rapid Evaluation Practitioner (REP) programme has now been running for over a year with a fully targeted membership of 50 REPs. The REP programme is an opportunity for dentists to contribute their expertise to SDPBRN, helping to bridge the gap between practice and research. In the past year the REPs have participated in many exciting research studies including Oral Health Management of Patients Prescribed Bisphosphonates and Prevention and Treatment of Periodontal Diseases, to name just a few.

An active study that some REPs have been involved in is the Alcohol Advice in Dental Practice Pilot Study. In this study dentists asked 100 new or recall patients to complete a social history form to help them assess the patient’s alcohol risk factor. Alcohol advice signposting cards were provided to give to at-risk patients. The dentists were split into 3 groups: Group 1 had limited guidance on how to engage with patients and provide such advice; Group 2 were provided with an alcohol risk pathway to assist with giving advice; Group 3 were given the risk pathway and also attended a training day which included some very interactive role playing with actors from Kingston University, London, posing as ‘challenging’ patients (see photograph). The Group 3 dentists were certainly game and up for the challenge! This study is ongoing and a report will be drafted in due course.

In March 2013, SDPBRN held a training day for the REPs, who came as far as the Isle of North Uist and Wick to attend. There were several speakers involved in a variety of research projects in the primary dental care setting. One speaker, David Conway, University of Glasgow, presented on his forthcoming research study HOPSCOTCH – HPV Oral Prevalence in SCOTland feasibility study. With help from the training day, the HOPSCOTCH team have now fully recruited for their study which will be underway later this year. This will be just one of many interesting and exciting studies for the REPs to participate in. Watch this space for more...

Developing an Oral Health Epidemiological Data Collection in Scotland

The most recent clinical epidemiological survey of the oral health of Scotland’s adult population was carried out as part of the 1998 UK Adult Dental Health Survey. Traditional methods of gathering population oral health information (POHI) require home visits to be undertaken by specially trained dentists. An alternative approach is for POHI to be gathered by GDPs but it is currently proving difficult to use most existing practice management software for this purpose.

Up to date POHI is urgently needed to enable evaluation of oral health trends and support appropriate planning of dental services in Scotland. To help facilitate this, SDPBRN conducted a rapid evaluation study exploring the feasibility of using a paper-based data collection system to gather this type of information. SDPBRN REPs piloted the data collection form and participated in a telephone interview exploring their views and experience of collecting this data.

All REPs thought it was important to collect such data and thought the data should be used: to evaluate the current oral health of Scotland’s population; to inform planning, at the national and regional level; to ensure dental services target the right areas; to help decide future priorities.

What do you think? Drop us a line with your views!

Managing Decontamination in Dental Practice Guidance

SDPBRN REPs recently participated in a decontamination management pilot study.

A key part of decontamination management is to have in place policies, procedures and records of decontamination activities. To help dental practices create these documents, the Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP) has developed a collection of online template documents called Managing Decontamination in Dental Practice (MDDP). A recent pilot study investigated how well the MDDP documentation meets the needs of dental practices.

Around 20 REPs completed a checklist to assess the current status of their decontamination documentation. They then used the SDCEP templates to check their existing documents or create new documents. The REPs gave feedback on their experience of this in writing and through short telephone interviews.

Overall, the feedback from the REPs was very positive. Several found the MDDP documents extremely helpful in identifying changes in their own practice. Suggestions for improvement included: giving more explanation of the rationale for a management system; clarifying the distinction between policies and procedures; better navigation of the online documents; amending the template style. There were also numerous useful suggestions for changes to individual template documents.

Input of this type from primary care practitioners is crucial in creating user-friendly resources. SDCEP is now using the findings of this study to modify both the content and the delivery method of the MDDP documentation in preparation for its publication later this year.

New Publication

A Scottish cost analysis of interceptive orthodontics for thumb sucking habits – publication by Felicity Borrie and one of our researchers, Paula Elouafkaoui, is now available in the Journal of Orthodontics, June 2013 40:145-154. SDPBRN would also like to congratulate Felicity on the successful completion of her PhD.

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