



Leading industry standards

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For young and newly-qualified dentists, and for those who look to broaden their horizons with implant courses, for example, I wonder how many of those really know how much work goes on behind the scenes to set the standards we have today. I spoke to **Edmund Proffitt**, Chief Executive of the British Dental Industry Association, about market trends, setting standards and UK dentistry through times of difficulty.

Interestingly, the total sales value of metal implants in the UK is way lower than in Germany, Spain, France and Italy – why do you think that may be?

EP Primarily I think it's down to differing national structures for oral care provision

across Europe e.g., private versus state funded, coupled with differing patient/consumer attitudes to aesthetic dentistry and dental cultures. The NHS is a significant reason for this, with an open access NHS dental system geared towards the widespread provision of cost-effective dental care, it is not conducive to growing the market for implantology. It may also be that our 'dental heritage' does not traditionally drive large numbers of patients to significant expenditure on the implant sector.

There is some evidence to suggest that the private sector is starting to show some positive signs of recovery in this area. Coming out of lockdown there seems to be some pent-up desire for higher end cosmetic work fuelled by increases in disposable income for certain sectors of patients. There is also the impact of increased numbers of patients transitioning from NHS care to private care, where there could be an upscaling to implantology. Many have forecast the future growth of implant activity

in the UK for a long time, seeing little progress, but maybe we are now possibly on the cusp of seeing some of this growth.

There are clearly some issues affecting the UK at the moment. What concerns have members expressed, and how are you working to reassure them?

EP It is a challenging time, and most of the issues faced by BDIA members aren't dental-specific, such as logistical difficulties, significantly increased freight costs, spiralling regulatory costs and some raw materials shortages. The issues that many are experiencing are high on the list of the government's priorities to tackle. We're working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), Border Force and many other departments and agencies to ensure the continuity of supply and the maintenance of the highest product standards.



addition to the profession and industry – what's next?

EP There has been a definite speeding up of the shift in buying dental products online over recent years, exacerbated by COVID-19. We have and will continue to work extensively with the MHRA to focus our efforts into educating the dental profession to the dangers of buying goods from non-reputable overseas based online sellers. Dentistry in the UK is highly regulated, whether you are a dental professional or an equipment manufacturer and supplier. This for a good reason, to provide high quality care with the utmost patient safety, and the dental profession should take purchasing equipment seriously, and buy only from reputable suppliers, such as BDIA members. The Association's Counterfeit and Substandard Instruments and Devices Initiative (CSIDI) was launched seven years ago to address the growing problem of counterfeit and substandard devices being purchased within the dental sector, and we are delighted with the extent to which this message has been taken to heart by the profession.

We welcome the recently enhanced powers of enforcement in the Medicines and Medical Devices Act, which significantly aid the fight against the sale and use of counterfeit and non-compliant medical and dental devices. There is still room for improvement, but it is so important to know and trust that the equipment you are purchasing is of the expected standard and from a reputable supplier.

What words of advice – representing the industry – would you give to anyone starting out on an implant course/career?

EP I would really hammer home the need to work with the very best educators and trainers in the field, along with reputable suppliers. They are the experts, and they're experts for a good reason. You may also wish to look at the wholesale adoption of digital technology for the best complete implant journey. It is also important to consider the benefits of start to finish treatment integration and the continuity of this treatment chain to give the best possible patient experience and outcomes, and if needed, aftercare. There is a large range of implant suppliers in the UK, not to mention the variety of implants themselves. Do your research thoroughly. As in all walks of life, it is easy to cut corners, but in doing so you create a false economy. It is easy to buy a cheap car, but how much will you spend in repairs

and maintenance? There can also be dental-legal implications too if treatments go badly, so always get the best training and select the best implants and associated equipment, after all, you will be responsible for the work you undertake on patients.

Dentistry in the UK is strictly regulated for a reason. Our standards are high, and it is part of our role as the BDIA to ensure the industry maintains its high standards, which is for everyone's benefit. All members of the BDIA sign up to and adhere to a code of practice, which should offer peace of mind that you're buying from a reputable source.

The BDIA has grouped together dental equipment, dental supplies and dental services available from their members into 23 key categories that are essential for running a dental business. To see what's available, visit www.bdia.org.uk/product-directory ♦



Bio

With over 35 years' insight into the trade association environment, Edmund has a wealth of experience working with organisation members, government, regulators and stakeholders. Responsible for establishing the industry's award-winning initiative tackling counterfeit and non-compliant dental equipment, and leading industry discussions on the development and implementation of the UK's new post-Brexit medical devices regulatory regime, Edmund is in an ideal position to ensure that the dental industry's voice is heard in changing and challenging times.

He also sits on a number of industry and medical devices committees and groups and is the current Chairman of the UK MedTech Forum, and Vice Chair of the Life Sciences National Registration Council.

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Problems with shipping, raw materials and air freight caused by the pandemic will take time to ease and return to normal. It is a similar story with delays relating to Brexit. There are some sporadic border delays that we have been made aware of, and the dual medical device regulatory system now in place for GB/UK due to the Northern Ireland protocol has taken time to fully comprehend.

It's reassuring that the UK has a robust logistic delivery and supply network, but it would be remiss not to note that we're going through a time when there is a combination of lots of small factors adding up at the same time that have caused some difficulties. Manufacturers and suppliers are reaching the point where they cannot absorb these costs, and they will be passed on at some point, but again this is not just specific to dentistry.

You mention cutting corners. Your CSIDI campaign has been a necessary