**Nobel Biocare World Tour launched in Shanghai**

**Singapore next Asian city to host a three-day event in June**

**GOTHENBURG:** Chinese dental health professionals recently met in Shanghai to participate in this year’s Nobel Biocare World Tour Conference. The event, which took place in late April, offered a number of workshops, hands-on courses and one-on-one sessions on the latest technologies in aesthetic and restorative dentistry. Dental students and dental professionals also participated in a Poster Awards Programme that gave them the opportunity to share their experiences using the company’s products and solutions.

In China, 11 per cent of the population is denture-wearing (approximately 145 million people) and slow sales of items like braces and crowns. “Market growth has slowed in higher-end discretionary treatments,” said Bret Wise, chief executive of manufacturer DENTSPLY International, during the company’s first-quarter conference call. A set of veneers can cost US$10,000, while the implant and crown-and-bridge work that reconstructs a tooth can cost US$5,000. Dental insurance, for those who have it, usually does not cover optional treatments and often does not cover even those treatments necessitated by pain.

“Therefore, patients tend to postpone these treatments or downgrade to cheaper alternatives in an economic downturn,” said Dr Matthew Messina, owner of a general dental practice in suburban Cleveland, Ohio. “In dentistry, it’s less the economy than the perception of the economy,” he said. “If people are confident about their future, their job, then they’re willing to invest in more elective procedures.”

This past quarter’s results reflected the new tendency of dental patients to keep their wallets in their pockets. Small-cap Birmer Dental Management, which helps patients with the fast growing segments of dental implants and cone beam computed tomography (CBCT), although terms of the transaction were not disclosed, a definitive agreement has been signed by mid-April between the two companies, according to a press release. The transaction is expected to close in the third quarter, subject to customary closing conditions.

The company has announced to launch a number of workshops, one-on-one sessions on the latest technologies in aesthetic and restorative dentistry, smile makeovers and other courses. The company has committed to invest in new technologies and services to better serve patients.

The company has announced that the new technology will be launched in Singapore next month, and will be followed by conferences in Asia, Europe and Latin America throughout the year.

**Takeovers**

**McLEAN:** Mars Inc. has recently announced a merger agreement with Chicago-based Wrigley Jr. Company in a transaction valued at US$25 billion. Under the terms of the agreement, Wrigley will become a stand-alone subsidiary of Mars while shareholders of Wrigley will receive US$800 in cash for each share of Common Stock and Class B Common Stock.

The proposed transaction is subject to customary closing conditions, including approval by Wrigley stockholders and certain governmental and agency regulatory clearances. Both parties hope to close the transaction within the next 6 to 12 months.

With US$5.4 billion in sales, Wrigley is a world leader in gum and confections. The transaction is expected to build the Mars business by strengthening and diversifying its confectionery business, and enhancing its potential for growth in the chocolate, non-chocolate confectionery and gum categories.

**5M acquires IMTEC Corp.**

**ST PAULS:** 5M ESPE recently announced the acquisition of IMTEC Corporation which will give the company access to the fast growing segments of dental implants and cone beam computed tomography (CBCT). Although terms of the transaction were not disclosed, a definitive agreement has been signed by mid-April between the two companies, according to a press release. The transaction is expected to close in the third quarter, subject to customary closing conditions.

The combined company would have a strong foundation of established brands in six core growth categories including world renowned products like M&Ms, Snickers, Dove, Mars, and Doublemint.

“When this transaction is completed, we will be proud to welcome Wrigley’s associates to our company,” said Paul S. Michaels, Global President of Mars. “The strong culture and heritage of two longstanding American companies with a shared commitment to innovation, quality and best-in-class global brands provides a great basis for this combination. We are looking forward to continuing on our path of growth by jointly developing those values even further.”

**Dentistry slows down in the US**

**NEW YORK:** Makers of dental veneers aren’t smiling so brightly these days as the slowing US economy weakens demand for expensive optional treatments. In the first quarter, companies such as diversified manufacturers 5M, DANAHER or dental distributor Henry Schein reported slower sales of items like braces and crowns. “Market growth has slowed in higher-end discretionary procedures,” said Bret Wise, chief executive of manufacturer DENTSPLY International, during the company’s first-quarter conference call.

A set of veneers can cost US$10,000, while the implant and crown-and-bridge work that reconstructs a tooth can cost US$5,000. Dental insurance, for those who have it, usually does not cover optional treatments and often does not cover even those treatments necessitated by pain.

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**Den-Mat wins patent infringement suit on LUMINEERS**

Robert Gottlander and others at the press conference in Shanghai, Photo: Nobel Biocare.

**LOS ANGELES:** Den-Mat Corporation’s summary judgment verdict dismissing the infringement allegation of PSN Illinois was recently affirmed by the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Chicago-based PSN had alleged that Den-Mat’s LUMINEERS manufacturing process, along with similar processes employed by companies like Invisalign, Micro Dental Labs, National Dentex Corp, and Dentisply infringed the claims of its now expired US patent No. 4,579,550. Den-Mat won the summary judgment on a claim construction basis that its product, LUMINEERS, did not fall within the scope of the asserted PSN claims.

The appeal to the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit centered around the interpretation of the phrase “ready for mounting,” which the district court had interpreted to mean “leaving the veneer untouched while traditional veneers usually require the removal of sensitive tooth structures.” Besides teeth that have been whitened, they offer permanent whitening and are used in many cases to finish orthodontic treatment, according to the company.