Beyond endodontics: Roots Summit 2010

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BARCELONA, Spain: What do Barcelona and endodontics have in common? For me, the answer was nothing, until last week’s Roots Summit. From now onwards, I will forever connect Gaudi, Paella and La Sagrada Familia with root canals.

It is certainly not an exaggeration to say that Roots Summit 2010 had all of those lucky enough to attend falling in love with endo all over again. Organised by Drs Noemí Pascual and Nuria Campo and their team, the meeting was a grand success. Long hours in the dark, yet always crowded lecture hall, despite the perfect weather, were followed by a wonderful social programme with a distinct Spanish touch.

Dr Fred Barnett, who lectured on Trauma injuries: Long-term treatment planning based on Dx and Pulpar regenerative technique, commented: “Congratulations to Nuria and Noemí for organising a fantastic Roots Summit. The venue was awesome and the lectures top notch. Roots should be proud of their efforts.”

The impressive list of international speakers included Dr Giuseppe Cantatore from Italy, Drs José María Malfaz and Enrique Martinez Merino from Spain, and Drs Hans-Willi Hermann and Jörg Schröder from Germany, to name a few.

Dr Sashi Nallapati from Jamaica held two very interesting lectures on rare and challenging cases: Dens invaginatus: Treatment options and Three canal preparations: An endodontic challenge. Many in the audience had never encountered such cases and, thus, were absorbed in these presentations.

In fact, many of the lectures were very entertaining and of extremely high quality with regard to the content as well as presentation. “It was great to see presentations that staggered me with the quality of the material and the multimedia that were shown,” commented Dr Glen van Ass, who lectured on Microscope centered practice: Ergonomics and documentation. “Videos through the operating microscope and still photos from some of the experts were incredible. It is impressive to see the quality of the work that these teachers and talented clinicians can provide in a humble yet confident manner.”

The meeting was sponsored by major industry players, like VDW, Zeiss, Dentsply Maillefer, SybronEndo Europe and Kodak. Dr John Schoeffel from the US, who introduced EndoVac – an endodontic irrigation technology system—in his lecture, also presented the product to interested attendees at the Discus booth. EndoVac enables safe irrigation to apical termination with an abundant supply of fresh irrigant. Unlike positive pressure systems that use cannulas to deliver irrigants into the canal, the EndoVac is a true apical negative pressure system that draws fluid apically by way of evacuation.

“It’s not often that meetings inspire and rejuvenate people and make them look forward to future meetings,” commented Dr Nallapati. “To me, certainly, this Roots Summit has done all that. And that is a testimony to the wonderful effort of Nuria, Noemí and their team.” Attendee Dr Mahalaxmi Sekar agreed, saying that he joined all those who had missed this event in Barcelona.

A majority of the lectures, for which continuing education credits can be obtained, were recorded live and will be made available for review on www.dtstudyclub.com. For more information on how to register and how to obtain credits, please contact Ms Julia Wehkamp at julia.wehkamp@dtstudyclub.com.

The date and venue for next year’s meeting are yet to be decided. But one thing is for sure: this year’s attendees are counting down the days.

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Snacks consumed at midnight are bad for teeth

The researchers from Universities in Copenhagen and Kansas, USA, who examined data from 2,217 men and women enrolled in a World Health Organization medical study, also found that the nocturnal eaters had lost more teeth at the later point in the study than the non-nocturnal eaters, even after taking into account potential influencing factors like age, smoking status, and the amount of sugar or carbohydrates in their diet.

Nocturnal eaters are defined as consuming a quarter or more of their daily calories after their evening meal, and waking up to have a snack in the middle of the night at least twice a week.

While dentists may not be able to stop their patients feasting in the middle of the night, the researchers recommend making them aware of the associated risks.

Dental practitioners should be aware of the oral-health implications of nocturnal eating, increase screening and oral-health education efforts amongst nocturnal eaters, and make treatment referrals when appropriate, they said.

Suction gets portable and cheap

NEW YORK, USA/LEIPZIG, Germany: A portable dental suction device aimed at dentists in developing countries has been developed by a team of Bioengineering and Biology students at Rice University in Texas, USA. The small, battery-powered version of a commonly used dental vacuum system is claimed to be able to manage five hours of heavy-duty use without the need for re-charging, and costs less than US$200 to manufacture.

Vacuum suction units are standard in most dental practices nowadays but difficult to operate in rural environments or in developing countries, in which dentists are often left to operate with limited equipment and with little or no electricity sources. In addition, common vacuum suction devices can cost up to US$1,000 per unit.

According to team member and Bioengineering senior student Jaime Wirth, the idea of a inexpensive portable suction device came up after members of the University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston went on a dental mission to South America last summer where they found it difficult to remove waste like saline and blood from patients’ mouths during dental procedures.

“The clinicians were using gauze and would end up with huge amounts of hazardous waste,” she said. “Our system can run without direct electrical service and should protect patients from swallowing debris during procedures, save dentists time as they perform these procedures and greatly reduce the amount of waste the team needs to dispose of.”

While still under development, the system will undergo its first field test by dentists in rural parts of Texas over the summer, the students added. If successful, it will be considered a standard component of Rice University’s dental Lap-in-a-backpack developed by Beyond Traditional Borders, a University-based initiative to address the health needs of developing countries around the world.