Doctors rally to offer free care for refugees

RAMZI BARNOUTI is a quiet knight for asylum seekers in Sydney, organising free medical care which they cannot afford and the Federal Government does not offer.

The Iraqi specialist has gathered a small team of pro bono doctors to provide GP, specialist and dental services for between 80 and 100 families on the Red Cross Asylum Seeker Program who do not meet government benefits criteria. He wants drug companies and laboratories to come on board too.

Dr Barnouti, 70, a retired urologist who migrated in December 2005 but was unable to practise here, approached the Red Cross in 2006 and they developed the pro bono scheme together. “I chose refugees because these are people who need help very much,” he said.

“I said ‘just call doctors and they will agree, anywhere in the world, 90 per cent will say yes’.”

Tooth troubles could raise dementia risk

Tooth loss and mouth illnesses may boost the risk of dementia later in life, U.S. research shows.

Of participants *who did not have dementia at the first examination (of annual exams over a 12-year period), those with few teeth -- zero to nine -- had an increased risk of developing dementia during the study, compared with those who had 10 or more teeth. The team offered several possible reasons for this association, including periodontal disease, early-life nutritional deficiencies, and infections or chronic diseases that may result simultaneously in tooth loss and brain damage.

Further research is needed to confirm whether there is a direct link between tooth loss and increased risk of dementia, the researchers said.

“It is not clear from our findings whether the association is causal or casual,” they wrote.

Dental School Is Not Business School

TM Disorders: Diagnostic Classification of Temporomandibular Disorders

Hitting first base four key areas for new practice owners

If you’ve tried mints, mouthwash and toothpaste but your breath still offend, maybe you should skip the oral hygiene aisle. Next time, try the dairy case.

In a small study, Japanese researchers have found that eating traditional, sugarless yogurt reduces the malodorous compounds that cause bad breath. It also cuts down on plaque and gingivitis, they discovered.

The study, funded in part by a major Japanese yogurt maker, was presented March 16 at the International Association for Dental Research annual meeting, in Baltimore.

Halitosis, or bad breath, is caused by anaerobic bacteria that feed on the back of the tongue, producing volatile sulfur compounds. One of those compounds, hydrogen sulfide, is the stuff that causes your breath to smell like rotten eggs.

Lead author Kenichi Hojo and colleagues from Tsurumi University in Yokohama, Japan, decided to investigate yogurt because of its effects in preventing gastrointestinal problems and research indicating that regular yogurt consumption reduces the risk of dental decay.

“Are we thinking that yogurt must be good for oral health, also,” said study co-author Nobuko Maeda, a professor of microbiology at the university.

Researchers recruited 24 volunteers. Each person received identical instructions for oral hygiene, diet and medication intake. In the initial phase of the study, participants were asked not to consume yogurt or products containing streptococci and lactobacilli, such as cheese and yogurts.

UAE requires dentists to hire nurses

Private sector dentists in the UAE without a technician or a nurse will be barred from renewing their licence under a new policy set by the Ministry of Health, reported Khaleej Times. Dr Ibrahim Ali Al Qadi, Director of the Private Medical Practice Department at the MoH, said dentists have until April 50, 2008.

Yogurt May Chase Away Bad Breath

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For more information about the study, contact Kenichi Hojo at hojo@tsurumi.ac.jp.