

PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release: Monday, 05 October 2009

PHOBIC PATIENTS POSE INCREASED RISK, WARNS MDDUS

A fear of going to the dentist is generally regarded as a trivial problem and patients who can't cope with treatment often think they are being silly or stupid. But such fears can have serious implications, warns an article in the latest issue of Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland (MDDUS) magazine, *Summons*.

The article says that studies have shown that a significant percentage of the UK population are anxious about dental treatment, despite advances in the delivery of dental care – and some of the patients display a genuine phobia of the dental chair.

MDDUS warns that the treating dentist must think of these patients as providing an increased risk. Aubrey Craig, head of the dental division of the UK-wide MDDUS says: "Phobic patients may claim that they have not consented to the treatment suggested.

"Their phobia could prevent them from rationally comprehending what is being explained and discussed with them, and therefore it is implicit that the dentist takes additional time to obtain valid consent."

MDDUS reminds dentists that should this group of patients be treated using conscious sedation (including inhalation sedation, intravenous drugs or oral sedation) the dentist must have appropriate training which must be updated regularly. This is also true for dental nurses assisting with care.

Craig adds: "As well as completing appropriate training, practices providing conscious sedation must consider having an Automated External Defibrillator available for use should the need arise."

Ends

For further information contact Colin Calder on 0141 616 2677 or 07850 510881.

Note to editors

MDDUS is a medical and dental defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medico- and dento-legal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK. For further information on MDDUS go to www.mddus.com.