

PRESS RELEASE



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PRESCRIBE ANTIBIOTICS WITH CARE, MDDUS WARNS DENTISTS.

Dentists are being urged by MDDUS to take care in prescribing antibiotics, and not succumb to their own, or their patient's misgivings.

A number of recent calls to the UK-wide medical defence organisation have highlighted the issue that for many years antibiotic prophylaxis to prevent endocarditis formed a cornerstone of safe dental care. However, following the publication of NICE guideline 64 in 2008, prophylaxis for dental procedures is no longer recommended.

While these guidelines are certainly evidence-based, they have caused concern amongst dentists - some of whom have contacted the MDDUS to seek reassurance before carrying out potentially bacteraemia-inducing procedures on at-risk patients.

MDDUS stresses that if a patient's cardiologist wishes a patient to have antibiotic prophylaxis in relation to invasive dental treatment, it can only be given on receipt of a letter from the cardiologist confirming they wish this done.

Doug Hamilton, dental advisor, says: "A comprehensive, concurrent medical history will minimise the risk of an allergic response or drug interaction. However, any adverse outcome which results from provision of prophylaxis in contravention of NICE 64 could be highly problematic to defend."

MDDUS also points out that dental practitioners should be aware that, with the emergence of so-called 'superbugs', the wider issue of antimicrobial provision is coming under ever increasing scrutiny.

For example, NICE guideline 74 advises against "antibiotic prophylaxis for clean non-prosthetic surgery" and is therefore at odds with routine provision of metronidazole as a means of preventing dry sockets.

The SDCEP guidelines, also published in 2008 are equally restrictive, advising in robust terms that employing local drainage to treat dental infections will allow use of antibiotics to be "kept to a minimum".

Hamilton concludes: "Practitioners should familiarise themselves with these important guidance documents to ensure that their prescribing patterns conforms with current best practice."

Ends

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

Note to editors

MDDUS (Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland) is a medical 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.