

PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release: Monday, 08 March 2010

ENSURE APPROPRIATE ORTHODONTIC EXAMINATION CLAIMS, SAYS MDDUS

Dentists must pay careful attention when making claims for payments for orthodontic examinations, warns MDDUS.

The UK-wide medical defence organisation is reminding dentists of the potential problems in this area following new guidelines being issued – given that claims for payment submitted by dental practitioners are scrutinised by the appropriate payment authority to check if they are correct.

MDDUS points out that Practitioners Services in Edinburgh has this month highlighted the claiming of Orthodontic examination fees by dentists, attempting to clarify the appropriateness of 1A and 1B claims.

The written advice is very clear – orthodontic examination fees can only be claimed for a patient who has an established or developing malocclusion.

During a dental examination, if an orthodontic problem is detected, an orthodontic examination should be carried out, with such findings being fully recorded in the patient's dental record.

Following the formulation of a diagnosis, the orthodontic condition should be observed or treated appropriately. Orthodontic 1A or 1B examination fees are not available to a dentist if a hospital or other practitioner is carrying out suitable treatment or supervising a period of retention.

Aubrey Craig, head of the dental division at the MDDUS says: "Orthodontic examinations have always been a 'grey' area for practitioners. Not everyone is fully trained in the assessment of a malocclusion. What may be a developing problem may well self-correct as the child develops.

"However, the latest guidance should be helpful to practitioners. On the GP17-0 claim form practitioners must describe the problem and not merely record the clinical scenario. This additional information will assist those making payments. Again, reference to the correct entry in the dental record will be supportive."

MDDUS is stressing to dentists that they study the wording of the new guidelines. "Inaccurate claims can lead to the withholding of fees, disciplinary action by the member's Health Board, or even referral to the General Dental Council."

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 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.