

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **TAKE SPECIAL CARE WITH PERIODONTAL CLAIMS, WARNS MDDUS**

Scottish dentists must pay careful attention when keeping records and making claims for periodontal treatment, warns MDDUS.

The UK-wide dental defence organisation is reminding dentists of the potential problems in this area given that claims for payment submitted by dental practitioners are scrutinised by payment authorities to check if they are correct.

MDDUS points out that, like all dental sub-specialties, periodontology presents its own unique challenges. In susceptible patients, suppression of the disease process can be a seemingly never-ending process, particularly if home care is poor.

However, failure to maintain the health of supporting tissues can lead to widespread loss of dentition and makes subsequent placement of implants highly problematic.

Doug Hamilton, MDDUS dento-legal advisor stresses that a rigorous prevention regime for at-risk patients must therefore form an essential component of patient care.

But he says: "The degree of subjectivity inherent in assessing the quality of periodontal treatment together with the complexities of the relevant Statement of Dental Remuneration (SDR) provisions can lead to problems when relevant fees are being claimed."

Hamilton emphasises that accurate interpretation of the SDR is required in order to receive the fee being claimed.

For example, if an item 1(c) examination has not been claimed in the preceding 23 months, a claim for item 10(c) periodontal treatment will not be processed.

MDDUS also highlights that dentists should be aware that failure to satisfy the precise terms of the SDR can have consequences beyond the withholding of individual fees.

Hamilton says: "Where a pattern of mis-claims is identified it may be construed as being deliberate - resulting in recovery of significant monies or even the involvement of the counter-fraud service.

"The legitimacy of claims for many items of service can often be corroborated by re-examination of the patient, accompanied perhaps by reference to radiographs or laboratory

invoices. However, objective analysis of periodontal treatment can be very difficult, especially in patients who re-accumulate calculus rapidly."

The advice from MDDUS is that while all clinical records should be contemporaneous and as comprehensive as possible - special care should be taken to record periodontal treatment, pocket depths, preventive advice and patient compliance.

Hamilton adds: "This will certainly assist in offering a robust defence against an allegation of supervised neglect.

"Conversely, it will also verify to the payment authorities that each facet of the treatment claimed was actually provided and that its degree of complexity is an accurate reflection of the patient's needs."

## **Ends**

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

## **Note to editors**

MDDUS (The 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](http://www.mddus.com).