

PRESS RELEASE



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IS YOUR PATIENT GOING ABROAD FOR DENTAL TREATMENT?

Dentists are facing a growing number of patients who come to them after receiving inadequate treatment abroad according to new figures.

UK-wide dental defence organisation MDDUS has today issued advice to members who have to deal with the fall-out of patients who opt to get treatment on the continent, only to return to their dentist when things don't work out as planned.

A recent British Dental Association (BDA) poll found 29 per cent of UK dentists had treated a patient for complications while getting dental work done abroad.

When you consider that an estimated 100,000 people in the UK head to Eastern Europe each year for cheaper treatment, these figures are put in perspective.

MDDUS dental adviser Claire Renton says: "If problems arise from treatment abroad, the dentist in this country is not responsible but may feel an ethical obligation towards helping the patient.

"Dentists can offer advice and any remedial treatment as well as the costs to fix the problem. If they do then treat the patient, then the UK dentist would only be responsible for the advice and care they provide. The treatment obtained abroad does not then become the responsibility of the UK dentist.

"Any claim for a refund for inadequate treatment must be directed to the overseas dentist who provided it and is not an issue for the UK-based dentist to get involved in."

While treatment abroad can undoubtedly be of a high standard, if there are complications there are several issues to consider such as what aftercare is provided and what happens if there are complications once the patient arrives home?

"Many patients are enticed to travel abroad for all sorts of treatment," adds Claire. "Some patients may feel the temptation to get cheaper cosmetic surgery, dental treatment or extensive restorative treatment is too good to resist.

"Patients understandably expect the quality of care to be the same the world over, but dental regulation is likely to vary according to country.

“Dentists in the UK are highly trained and regulated and the standard of care here is excellent. Patients should be aware that if they are paying less for their care abroad than they have been offered in this country, there is a potential risk that they are being offered sub-standard treatment.

“The best way to help prevent these incidents from occurring would be to ensure the patient is fully aware of the risks before they opt to seek treatment abroad, but that can only be achieved if the patient informs the dentist of their intentions.

“There are other things patients might not consider, such as will the dental team speak English and do they have insurance to cover the procedure?”

“Dentists can talk through the patient’s options and offer advice based on their dental history. The patient can then make a decision with an understanding of the potential risks involved.”

The GDC has produced a guidance document called *Going abroad for your dental care?* that offers advice to patients. It states that dental regulation is likely to vary according to country and there is no guarantee the country will have the same standards as in the UK or have a regulatory body.

It also reminds patients that: “before you commit to travelling abroad for dental treatment, it’s important you are fully aware of what to expect and what risks are involved.”

Ends

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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.