

The sunny side of dentistry

James Salter reports on the good work of the Sunnymede Trust

WHEN we think of doing a good deed, it's often something like giving up our seat on the bus or donating money for a good cause.

These selfless acts are only small in comparison to the many good deeds going on in dentistry and it is heart-warming to see the Sunnymede Trust in action, sharing their knowledge with nurses from different countries who work (in paid and voluntary roles) to improve healthcare and relieve suffering in disadvantaged communities. At the beginning of July, students on the Tropical Nursing Diploma course at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) attended a dental lecture led by the Sunnymede Trust (pictured, below left). This online yearly course is run by Claire Bernabinge, the nurse who inspired Live Aid in 1984.

The hands-on training of often non-dental students a fascinating insight into how to approach and manage oral health in developing countries where

access to dental care and resources are limited.

Henry Schein Minerva, the UK's largest practice support team, certainly understands the importance of this work and is pleased to provide equipment and consumable items for each session. Students were each given copies of the *First Aid/ One Health Manual*, specifically designed to serve as an educational and training resource for people with basic medical knowledge, who want to learn more about oral health and pain relief for people in disadvantaged communities.

Written by Sharon Rankin (practising dentist and chair of the Sunnymede Trust) and creative writer Martin Lantieri, the *One Health Manual* offers a blend of specialist dental knowledge in an easily understood form. There are no prerequisites other than basic medical training and no unrealistic expectations of high-tech resources as the reader is encouraged to work with what they have, to share the best achievable, safe practice.

Written in "plain English" with lots of images and a clear layout, students can read up on oral anatomy, health promotion and cross infection control as well as gain advice on how to set up and manage an oral health clinic, examine the mouth and diagnose common problems, perform injections in the mouth and carry out cleaning and simple extractions.

With this informative guide in hand, the LSHTM students were more than ready to get involved and practice basic oral procedures on each other. With the assistance of several dentists, who kindly gave up a morning to share their knowledge and expertise, together with the use of Henry Schein Minerva's products, students took their first steps towards helping to make a difference to world oral health.

They enjoyed being hands-on and were very engaged by the "Sunnymede side of dentistry" through this educational and motivating lecture. To begin with, they were introduced to the rest of any dental story, "anatomical, instruments and charting", learning the basics of tooth charting, how to use instruments safely in the mouth and how to diagnose oral conditions.

Students prepared themselves for the "injector" process with some apprehension but were relieved to find it painless with correct leads in place of needles. "Tooth extraction", with the aid of dental anatomy models, was an intriguing experience and many students were surprised to learn that it is much more about "skill and know-how" than "force and pressure".

It is easy to get caught up in our own little worlds and never think about the millions of people who "live with" dental pain so it's encouraging to see oral health integrated into a tropical nursing course.



Students become better equipped to offer emergency pain relief but the overriding focus is on how to teach prevention and encourage local communities to pay attention to oral health as a basic and not as a "luxury".

The Sunnymede Trust really values this ongoing opportunity to meet health workers from different parts of the world because it is a direct way to share knowledge and empower communities to own their oral health.

Henry Schein Minerva is proud to contribute to the work of Tooth Relief and to support the training of health workers by encouraging the spread of good and safe practice towards a significant improvement in world oral health.

For more information, e-mail the Sunnymede Trust via info@tsd.co.uk. As a registered charity, they do not receive any income and would especially appreciate offers of specialist training equipment (eg study models or skulls) and also to have their individuals or groups who could sponsor copies of the manual for communities who cannot afford to pay.

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