

Synopsis of 65th Scientific Meeting of HKSPD

Title: Background to the Behaviour Management Techniques we use in Paediatric Dentistry

Speaker: Dr. Bernadette Drummond
Associate Professor in Paediatric Dentistry, University of Otago
President of the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons

Date: Monday, July 13, 2009

The Hong Kong Society of Paediatric Dentistry was privileged to have guest lecturer Dr Bernadette Drummond from The University of Otago in Dunedin, who made a comprehensive presentation covering aspects of behaviour management in paediatric dentistry. Several areas were explored, which included the history of child management, and the major issue of fear and anxiety in dentistry. Causes of fear and anxiety in the dental setting were discussed, followed by measurement and assessment tools, and techniques in management.

Dr Drummond emphasized the importance of communication directed first and foremost to the child rather than the parent, and that each child should be treated fairly as an individual. She reported on the limited evidence in the literature and lack of consistency regarding childhood dental experiences and their contribution to fear and anxiety. General management techniques were discussed, including the use of appropriate language and vocabulary, ensuring that we acknowledge the child's feelings, as well as methods of distraction, positive reinforcement, time-out and pain control. Managing each child should be tailored according to their age, social and language development, and temperament. Additionally, it is important to understand dentistry from a child's perspective, and to have reasonable expectations.

As dentists and paediatric dentists, our ultimate aim should be to create compliant patients with non-disruptive behaviour, who will be comfortable with dental care throughout their adulthood. Dr Drummond stressed that there were no excuses for poor care, and that despite limited evidence in the literature, we often learn and find ideas through discussion with supportive colleagues.

Prepared by Dr Caroline Chung