Dubai School of Dental Medicine has been highly successful

By Dental Tribune Middle East

Dubai, UAE: A year after the successful opening of the Dubai School of Dental Medicine, we managed to catch up with Professor David Wray, Dean of DSDM to learn more about the developments since the opening.

DTMEA: Professor Wray, almost a year ago you opened the doors of the Dubai School of Dental Medicine with the aim to attract dental students and provide them with the opportunity to “Enbark on a three year extensive clinical training program with a clear didactic component and a research dissertation”. How has the school developed since the opening? Professor Wray: Since opening to students in January of this year DSDM has been highly successful. We accepted residents into our Pediatric Dentistry and Orthodontic programs in January and after completing our initial accreditation process with the CAA we have now accepted residents into all the specialty programs which we offer including Oral Surgery, Periodontology, Prosthodontics and Endodontics. Seeing the growth of the DSDM since its launch, what sets you apart from the other Dental Universities in the UAE and the region? The big bonus about DSDM is that graduates, as well as receiving their Master’s Degree at the end of their course, also receive a conjoint Specialty Membership Diploma from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. This Specialty Membership Diploma gives DSDM graduates a clinical qualification to complement their academic degree and a membership to the Royal College which is globally recognized, and DSDM provides a stimulating environment for graduates to carry out their postgraduate degree.

What are the major reasons for the regional dental students to choose DSDM? DSDM provides both academic and clinical training within Dubai without having to leave the Gulf region which is a huge benefit especially to female residents with domestic commitments. This can be achieved without compromise since we have a world-class international faculty of teachers. DSDM provides education and training of the highest quality in a range of specializations to its students, and has also received initial academic accreditation from the Commission for Academic Accreditation of the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The school is led by world-renowned specialists and is home to some of the world’s top specialists in the field. In addition, DSDM’s Partnership with The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (UK) provides postgraduate students, through a conjoint exam, with a membership diploma which guarantees recognition internationally at specialty level in all areas. DSDM is part of Dubai Healthcare City, which is the world’s first healthcare free-zone, and DSDM students are able to make the most of the world-class education facilities offered by the medical hub.

What are the further plans of DSDM in the coming 2 to 3 years? DSDM has plans to expand its clinical facilities to cope with the increased numbers of residents and patients expected next year. Our partnership with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh is also progressing and we have already run four college examinations in DHCC this year. We anticipate that we will become one of the largest global hubs for dental postgraduate examinations in the near future.

Could you please share your thoughts on the level of Dentistry in the UAE and the region? The quality of dental education and clinical practice in the UAE and the region is already very high but we hope to drive standards even higher with our postgraduate programs and of course, our graduates will be benchmarked clinically with the global standards set by the Edinburgh Royal College.

“We have now accepted residents into all the speciality programs” Could you emphasize on the dental industry developments in the region? We have seen dental companies expanding within the region and new ones coming. This reflects the interest in serving the dental community and the needs of the patients. In addition, the many conferences which Dubai hosts act as a platform to showcase the latest technology and how it can benefit the patients.

Through your experience as an educator, what should young students target when becoming a dental professional? Dentistry is largely a community-based profession and we need both general dentists and specialists to provide a full range of healthcare support for our patients so there is not just one path for a young dentist to follow. DSDM is dedicated to training specialists but there is a hugely important role for the generalist. Regardless of the path a young dentist chooses, it is important not to lose sight of the need for lifelong learning through continuing professional development be it in formal courses or through attendance at courses and self-directed learning. Dentists have a professional responsibility to keep up-to-date and DSDM is here to support them in that endeavor.

How can you describe the dental students in Dubai? The students in Dubai today are wonderful, mature, professional young dentists who are a family working towards a common goal. Our residents are a joy to teach and a privilege to be colleagues with.

Do you have any tips you would like to share with the young dental professionals? Because of the explosion of new knowledge young dentists must be constantly diligent and always treat the patients holistically. We don’t just do fillings; we care for the total oral health needs and wellbeing of our patients. We should be proud of our profession and the care we can provide.

Do you have anything else to share with the dental audience? Because DSDM is dedicated to specialization in dentistry we now represent a fantastic facility providing secondary oral healthcare to the community. Many dentists in UAE do not have the facilities or capacity to provide a fully comprehensive level of care and DSDM is here to provide support and expertise to the dental community. Whether the patients have complex restorative problems or serious mucosal disease, DSDM is here to help and welcomes referrals from all branches of the profession.