Europe Ticker +++



Polish EU Council presidency

Focus on health

On 1 January Poland took over the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. The motto of the Polish EU Council Presidency is: "Security, Europe!" The focus is on strengthening seven dimensions of European security, explicitly including health, which will concentrate on three areas: the digital transformation of healthcare, which includes the implementation of the European Health Data Space (EHDS); the mental health of children and young people; and health promotion and disease prevention.

Source: BZÄK-klartext 1/2025

EU Chemicals Agency examines ethanol

Germany warns of restrictions

In the light of an ongoing review by the EU Chemicals Agency into the hazard classification of ethanol, the leading German medical, dental and pharmacy associations and the German Hospital Association are urgently warning the German federal government of the consequences of a negative classification of the well-established disinfectant as a CMR substance (carcinogenic/mutagenic/reproductive toxicant). The availability and use of ethanol could be severely restricted—or even banned—as a result of health and safety regulations. According to the German Dental Association, ethanol is of vital importance as a disinfectant in medical and dental practices due to its superior effectiveness and is indispensable for the effective protection of both patients and healthcare staff against infection.

Source: BZÄK-klartext 1/2025

Antibiotic administration after tooth extraction

No demonstrable benefit

A retrospective cohort study by researchers from Ireland (Dublin Dental University Hospital) and France examined the association between antibiotic administration and postoperative complications after tooth extraction. The cohort included around 269,000 patients who underwent tooth extraction between 2015 and 2019. The researchers compared two groups of patients: one group that was prescribed an antibiotic before the operation and a second group that was not. The study paid particular attention to the occurrence of complications within seven days of the operation, such as oral infections, dry alveoli or fever.

The results showed that 31.8 per cent of patients received antibiotic prophylaxis, with amoxicillin being the most commonly used antibiotic. In most cases, an antibiotic was prescribed if the patient was to undergo a surgical extraction.

In total, 3,387 patients experienced a complication. Of these patients, 1,272 (37.5%) had received antibiotics, compared with 2,115 (62.5%) who had not.

Overall, the cohort study found no evidence of a demonstrable benefit in preventing postoperative complications by administering antibiotics before surgery.

Sources: ZWP Online Germany, 28 Feb 2025; nature.com

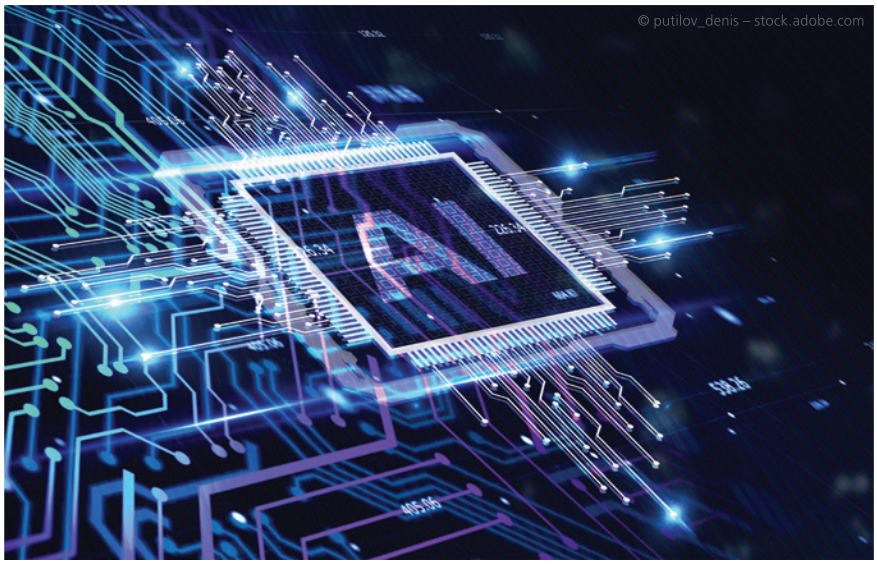
EU AI law

Social behaviour must not be evaluated

Under the EU's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act, the use of artificial intelligence programs that evaluate social behaviour is prohibited. The ban is the first provision in the implementation of the AI Act, which came into force in August 2024, the commission announced. To ensure compliance with the law, the commission will publish guidelines on prohibited AI practices. These guidelines would explain the legal concepts and provide practical use cases based on stakeholder input. These will be non-binding and will be updated as necessary.

Companies developing or using AI should assess their systems according to the level of risk and take appropriate measures to comply with the legal requirements. According to the commission, the aim of the new regulation is not only to protect consumer rights. It also intends to ensure that AI is used responsibly.

Source: zm-Online, Germany



GDC start-of-the-year report

More dentists in the UK

According to the General Dental Council (GDC), there were 45,580 dentists registered in the UK at the start of 2025. This is 1,371 dentists or 3.1 per cent more than in 2024. The number of registrations has increased steadily over the last five years: 2021, 41,863; 2022, 42,215; 2023, 43,130; 2024, 44,209; 2025, 45,580. The 793 (1.7%) dentists who did not renew their registration in 2025 was the lowest figure for the last five years. This percentage had fluctuated between 2.3% and 2.9% since 2021. Reasons for removal include voluntary removal, non-payment, retirement, and notifications of death.

However, the GDC noted that the data "does not provide insight into the number of professionals working in different patterns". For example, it remains unclear how many of the registered dentists work full-time or part-time, or whether they work in the National Health Service (NHS) or in the private sector.

Source: zm Online, 27 Jan 2025; GDC

Study by the University of Buffalo

Cannabis promotes dental caries

The smoking of cannabis correlates with an increased prevalence of dental caries and tooth loss. This finding was established by a working group at the University of Buffalo in a study published in the *Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA)*. The legalisation of cannabis in several US states has coincided with a rise in consumption of the drug. According to a study conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse in 2023, the percentage of young adults (aged 19 to 30) who used marijuana in the past year (sometimes daily) reached its highest level ever.

Building upon earlier clinical observations, a team of researchers led by Ellyce Clonan, DDS, at the University at Buffalo's School of Dental Medicine initiated a survey study to examine the effects of cannabis. This cross-sectional study analysed data from 5,656 participants aged 18 to 59 years who took part in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey from 2015 to 2018.

The analysis revealed that, in comparison to non-cannabis users, participants who reported cannabis use exhibited a 17% higher probability of developing crown caries (95%-CI, 1.02 to 1.35), a 55% higher probability of developing root caries (95%-CI, 1.21 to 1.99) and a 41% higher probability of tooth loss (95%-CI, 1.00 to 1.99), with adjustments made for age, gender, race or ethnicity, place of birth, education, family income relative to poverty, and alcohol consumption.

Source: School of Dental Medicine, University of Buffalo, NY, USA

Clonan E, Shah P, Cloidt M, Laniado N. Frequent recreational cannabis use and its association with caries and severe tooth loss: Findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2015–2018. J Am Dent Assoc. 2025 Jan; 156(1):9–16.e1. doi: 10.1016/j.adaj.2024.10.005.