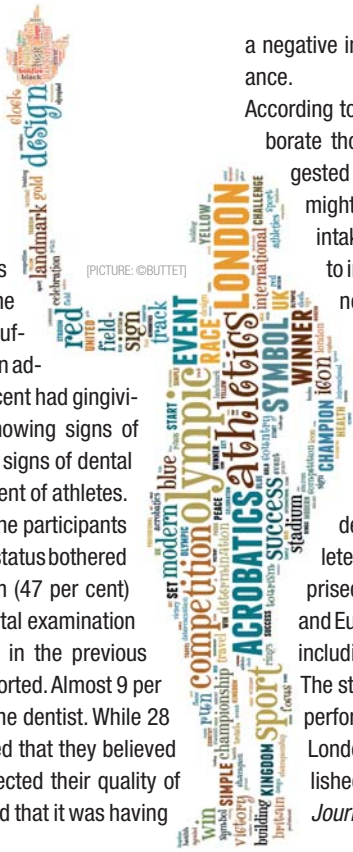
NEWS

Olympic athletes with

Poor oral health



[PICTURE: ©BUTTET]

Researchers from the UK have evaluated the oral health status of athletes who took part in the 2012 Olympic Games held in London. Through systematic oral check-ups, the researchers found that 55 per cent of the 302 athletes surveyed suffered from dental caries. In addition, more than 75 per cent had gingivitis, with 15 per cent showing signs of periodontitis. They found signs of dental erosion in about 45 per cent of athletes. Although 42 per cent of the participants said that their oral health status bothered them, nearly half of them (47 per cent) had not undergone a dental examination or professional cleaning in the previous year, the researchers reported. Almost 9 per cent had never been to the dentist. While 28 per cent of athletes stated that they believed that their oral health affected their quality of life, about 18 per cent said that it was having a negative impact on their training and performance.

According to the researchers, the findings corroborate those of previous studies, which suggested that poor oral health in sportsmen might be a result of frequent carbohydrate intake, a reduced immune function owing to intensive training, and a lack of awareness about the link between oral health, overall health and physical performance.

The study was conducted by researchers at University College London's Eastman Dental Institute at the dental clinic in the London 2012 athletes' village. The study population comprised athletes from Africa, the Americas and Europe competing in 25 different sports, including track and field, boxing and hockey. The study, titled "Oral health and impact on performance of athletes participating in the London 2012 Olympic Games", was published online on 24 September in the *British Journal of Sport Medicine* ahead of print.

Foreign dentists

Face language tests in UK



[PICTURE: ©WOAISS]

The UK Department of Health announced its plans to introduce language tests for European medical professionals wishing to work in the UK. The new regulation will give the General Medical Council (GMC) the power to impose checks where concerns arise about a doctor's English language competence.

According to the department, the new proposals are designed to complement and strengthen the existing language controls imposed on medical staff through the Responsible Officers Regulations, Performers Lists Regulations and other checks undertaken at a local level, which were introduced in April this year.

Health Minister Dr Dan Poulter explained that the GMC will be entitled to carry out assessments before allowing European doctors from outside the UK to treat patients in a hospital or general practice. By carrying out tests at a national level, the minister hopes to prevent doctors who do not have the necessary knowledge of English from treating patients. To be accepted on a centrally held list, general practitioners will have to demonstrate their ability to communicate in English. The new rules are expected to come into effect in 2014.

Predictors of satisfaction with

Aesthetic dental work

A new study conducted by researchers at the Department of Dental Public Health at King's College London has found that some dental patients may need to consult a psychologist before undergoing treatment. In a study with 60 participants, the researchers found that higher satisfaction with appearance before dental aesthetic treatment affected patients' satisfaction after treatment significantly.


[PICTURE: ©ARTFAMILY]

For the study, all participants were asked to assess satisfaction with their appearance before and after dental work according to a predefined scale. Additionally, they completed a personality test prior to the procedure. Among other findings, the researchers found that participants who were most satisfied with their appearance before receiving dental aesthetic treatment were also the happiest patients after treatment. On the other hand, neuroticism seemed to persist after treatment in those patients who were rather dissatisfied before.

"We found that it is in patients' and dentists' interest to ensure that patients receiving aesthetic dental work start from as high a point of satisfaction with their current appearance as possible. This will enhance the chances that they will be satisfied with the result of the treatment," the researchers concluded. The findings were presented on Wednesday at the British Psychological Society's Division of Health Psychology Annual Conference, which was held from 11 to 13 September in Brighton.

Dentophobia

More common in women than men

[PICTURE: ©ZAMETALOV]



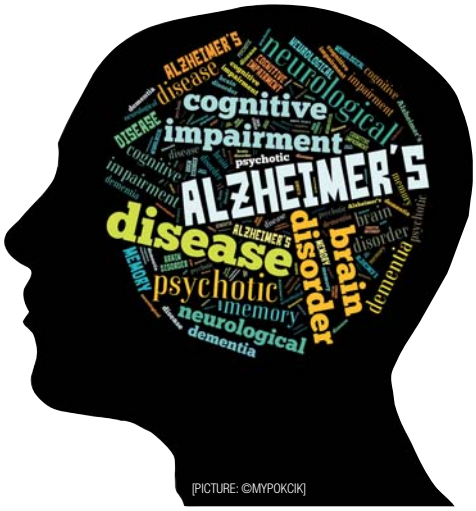
Dentophobia is equally common in both men and women. However, a new study has found that the level of disgust they experience with regard to dental treatment may differ significantly. In the study, 36 individuals with dentophobia (18 men and 18 women) and 36 non-dentophobic controls were asked to rate their arousal, disgust and fear while looking at images of dental treatment scenes and images depicting neutral scenes. Simultaneously, their heart rate and the activity of the musculus levator labii, a muscle used in prototypical facial disgust expression, producing nose wrinkles and upper lip retraction, were recorded electronically. Overall, male and female participants did not differ in their self-ratings. However, there were significant differences in facial expressions. According to the researchers, only dentophobic women showed enhanced disgust-related facial activity, indicating that targeting of disorder-specific disgust might be of great importance in the therapy of dentophobic women.

Although dentophobic men perceived dental treatment scenes as equally disgusting as did women, they displayed significantly lower disgust-related facial activity. However, the researchers suggested that male participants might have been more successful in inhibiting behavioural reactions. The study, titled "Can you read my pokerface? A study on sex differences in dentophobia", was published online on 12 September in the *European Journal of Oral Sciences* and will appear in the October issue. It was conducted at the University of Graz.

Poor dental health

May lead to Alzheimer's

People with poor oral hygiene or gum disease may be at a greater risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, a study led by the University of Central Lancashire's (UCLan) School of Medicine and Dentistry has found. For their study, the researchers examined samples from the donated brains of ten people without dementia and ten people with dementia. The research found the presence of products from Porphyromonas gingivalis in the brains of dementia patients.



[PICTURE: ©MYPOKCIK]

The research benefited from donated brain samples provided by Brains for Dementia Research, a brain donation scheme supported by Alzheimer's Research UK and Alzheimer's Society. Finding P. gingivalis in the brains of dementia sufferers is significant, as its presence in the brains of Alzheimer's disease patients has not been documented previously and the finding adds to a growing body of evidence that suggests an association between poor oral health and dementia.

These published research findings from human brain specimens are further supported by recent unpublished research on periodontal disease from the same group using animal models, which was carried out in collaboration with the University of Florida. This animal work has confirmed that P. gingivalis in the mouth finds its way to the brain once periodontal disease has become established.

Chewing popcorn may disturb

Moviegoers' perception of commercials

Psychologists from Germany have suggested that eating popcorn disrupts the way people process and remember brand names. In a recently published study, participants were invited to a movie theatre and were shown a block of foreign commercials prior to the film. Half of the participants were given popcorn to eat, while

[PICTURE: ©KTSDESIGN]



the other participants chewed gum or ate a single sugar cube. When the participants were presented with images of products one week after the cinema session, those who had eaten the sugar cubes exhibited higher preference and physiological responses for the brands advertised. In contrast, the participants who had consumed popcorn or gum during the commercials showed no evidence of advertising effects, the researchers said. According to researchers from the University of Cologne, the advertised products were less familiar to the participants owing to the fact that their mouth was obstructed when they were watching the commercials. Prior studies have shown that subvocal pronunciation, a covert mechanism of the mouth, is very important to the perception of information about new brands. The researchers said that each time a person encounters a new name the lips and the tongue automatically simulate the pronunciation of the name. Because they were chewing, the participants could not internally train the articulation of the brands' names.

The researchers concluded that advertising might remain unsuccessful in situations involving oral interference, such as snacking or talking. The study, titled "Popcorn in the cinema: Oral interference sabotages advertising effects", was published online on 29 September in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology* ahead of print.