



Dental PBRN Newsletter

Fall 2008

IN THIS ISSUE

[Study 6 Pilot Study](#)

[DPBRN Practitioner-
Investigator: Up Close and
Personal](#)

[Practitioner Spotlight](#)

[News Items](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Welcome to the Dental PBRN quarterly newsletter! This newsletter is designed to provide you a synopsis of the contents of our website, <http://www.DentalPBRN.org>.

You can also view the projects for which we are currently recruiting dental practitioners, as well as suggest and view new research ideas.

When you visit our website you can complete your online training course that will provide the foundation for you to begin on a project if you have not already done so.

Study 6 Pilot Testing

Before a study can begin recruitment, it first needs to be pilot tested in order to ensure that it will run smoothly in daily clinical practice. DPBRN study entitled "Questionable occlusal caries lesions" has begun this phase. Three practices in Alabama are testing the forms and logs and giving valuable feedback. Dr. Sonia Makhija, of Birmingham, AL, is the Principal Investigator of the study and testing the forms in her office. In addition, Drs. James Sanderson of Hoover, AL and Burton McGee of Florence, AL are also testing the forms. Based on initial suggestions, changes have been made to the form to help increase the ease and efficiency of this study. Once the forms have been tested in all the regions, they will be ready for the recruitment phase. For more information, please visit <http://www.DentalPBRN.org> or contact your Regional Coordinator. Many thanks to these practitioners for ensuring the success of these studies! Also, a special "thank you" to the office staff for their support and effort; the study has obtained valuable feedback that will contribute to the success of implementing the study.



Drs. Sanderson and Makhija look for radiographic evidence of caries.



Dr. James Sanderson tested the study in his general dentistry practice in Hoover, AL.



Dr. Burton McGee also tested the study in his pediatric office, in Florence, AL.

DPBRN Practitioner-investigator Up-close and personal: Jon Holmes, D.M.D., M.D., F.A.C.S. by Dr. Andrei Barasch



I met Dr. Jon Holmes at a continuing education course where he presented some of his head and neck cancer surgical cases. I had heard his name mentioned during the UAB Tumor Board meetings and knew he was an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) private practitioner in Birmingham who was active in oral oncology. I must admit that my initial reaction was mixed: on one hand, I was happy that dentistry made a significant claim to include malignant conditions of the maxillofacial region; on the other hand, being an academic lifer I was somewhat concerned about cancer being treated in private practice (I freely admit my bias here but will never acknowledge it if I run for elected office). It was with this ambivalence that I shook Dr. Holmes' hand and went on to learn a valuable life lesson.

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Dr. Holmes and I had had significant and valuable interactions since that handshake and I want to express here my gratitude to his invaluable contributions to DPBRN Study 7: Osteonecrosis of the Jaws. He was invaluable to this research project, which opened the door to other planned collaborations between our group at UAB and his practice.

Dr. Holmes is originally from Mississippi and graduated from his native State's School of Dentistry *Suma Cum Laude* in 1993. He completed requirements for his M.D. degree and the OMFS residency at the University of Alabama at Birmingham where he served as Chief Resident in 1998-99 and continued his training as a fellow in Portland, OR. Dr. Holmes returned to Birmingham and opened his practice in the historic South Side in 2002. In his relatively short career he has amassed a disproportionate number of honors and awards including Scholastic Excellence at the UAB School of Medicine, the American College of Dentists Award and the Wallace V. Mann Award for the highest GPA.

Impressive! But what really moved me to write this article is Dr. Holmes' active *pro-bono* research and his academic interests. Despite the fact that a private practice has a different bottom line, Dr. Holmes perceives as his duty to use his experience and patient population to help answer the myriad of questions still plaguing the Oral Oncology field. Not only are his patients cared for at the highest level of scientific evidence, but they also become exponents of innovation and development of new knowledge.

Needless to say, we are very happy to have Dr. Holmes in the DPBRN practitioner-investigator group and are looking forward to further successful collaboration. Dr. Holmes is a prime example of the fertility of the practice-based new frontiers in dental research.

Practitioner Highlight

In this issue, we are highlighting practitioner-investigator Dr. Paul Dirkes, who has participated in DPBRN Studies "Reasons for placement of restorations on previously unrestored surfaces", "Reasons for replacement or repair of restorations", "Longitudinal study of reasons for placement of restorations on previously unrestored surfaces", and "Patient satisfaction with dental restorations".

Dr. Dirkes was originally a scholarship recipient of the National Health Service Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. He spent two years active duty in Migrant Health in Illinois, then entered private practice for 21 years in Cincinnati while also in the active reserves of the Public Health Service. In 2003, he re-entered the P.H.S. but with the Indian Health Service. He was forced back to civilian status due to age limitations of the PHS but remained at the Indian Reservation as a Tribal employee. Since 2007, when all age restrictions on P.H.S. officers were lifted, he was elected to remain a civilian employee of the Poarch Creek Indians but was activated back as an Inactive Reserve Corp officer.



He joined DPBRN as clinical research has always interested him. Back in the 1980's, he was part of the International Dental Health Foundation whose focus was periodontal disease prevention and treatment. He just finished a five-year longitudinal study of the efficacy of fluoride varnish in a high risk Indian population and is currently in a five-year study of the efficacy of glass ionomer restorations in primary teeth in an Indian population.

News Items**Third annual meeting for Permanente Dental Associates practitioner-investigators**

About 35 practitioner-investigators and DPBRN project staff members met Saturday October 11th, 2008 in Portland, Oregon to discuss DPBRN study results, talk about current studies, and refine future studies.

Dan Pihlstrom, DPBRN Executive Committee member and practitioner-investigator, opened the meeting by offering several reasons why doing practice-based research is a worthwhile endeavor. Gregg Gilbert, DPBRN Network Chair, shared results from the first network-wide meeting held in Atlanta, GA in May. He shared that 98% of meeting attendees rated the overall quality as "Very Good" or "Good". Perhaps more telling was that 80% of attendees indicated they would change how they treated dental caries as a result of attending the network-wide meeting. David Mosen, Senior Program Evaluation Consultant, talked about the receipt of dental care and medical outcomes for adults with diabetes. Jeff Fellows, DPBRN principal investigator, shared preliminary results from Study 12: Osteonecrosis of the Jaw in two DPBRN health plans.

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Although the incidence of Osteonecrosis of the Jaw (ONJ) was very low in both Kaiser Permanente Northwest and Health Partners, the data suggest a connection of ONJ with a history of oral bisphosphonate use.

Dr. Pihlstrom shared some of the findings from DPBRN studies 1 and 2, as well as impressions from the network-wide meeting. He also presented several related articles from the Journal of Evidenced-Based Dentistry. Lisa Waiwaiole, DPBRN Regional Coordinator, answered questions about Study 5.2 and introduced studies 3 and 4.

Finally Drs. Fellows and Pihlstrom closed out the meeting with a brief discussion of DPBRN Study 17: Alternative caries treatment strategies for proximal D1 lesions (DPBRN ACT-1). Project staff members are looking forward to additional practitioner input on how to develop and implement this important randomized clinical trial. The study will evaluate the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of non-surgical treatment of proximal carious lesions compared to surgical treatment.



Practitioner-investigators discuss a presentation during the annual meeting.



Drs. Gregg Gilbert, Dan Pihlstrom, Jeff Fellows, and Mrs. Lisa Waiwaiole presented at the PDA meeting.

DPBRN Enrollment Is Flourishing in Minnesota

Enrollment in DPBRN is thriving in the Minnesota Region. As of July 30th the total MN Region enrollment is 68 practitioner-investigators. The Minnesota region has seen an increase of more than 18 new enrollees since January 2008. Of these members, 43 are within the HealthPartners Dental Group (39 dentists and four dental hygienists). Recently, an orientation to DPBRN has been added to the schedule for all new dentists on the HealthPartners Dental Group staff. This assures that they all know about DPBRN, and recognize it as part of the HealthPartners culture as soon as they come on board.

Enrolled member Dr. David Gesko, Dental Director and a Senior Vice President of HealthPartners, echoed this growing enthusiasm in DPBRN and gave a further call for new members in a memorandum that he sent to the entire HealthPartners Dental group:

“For those of you that are not currently enrolled, I strongly encourage each of you to do so. I’d love to see us have **complete enrollment** in this vital activity... To assure our long-term viability and growth, we must continue to differentiate ourselves by the way we practice dentistry, and participation in the DPBRN is a critical pathway to achieve that.”

Enrollment of dentist practitioner-investigators outside of the HealthPartners Dental Group is also climbing in the Minnesota region, with a current total of 25 members. Instrumental in bringing in these new practitioner-investigators is Executive Committee member Dr. Patrick Foy. The Minnesota Dental Association’s Evidence-based Dentistry Task Force, of which Dr. Foy is an active member, also promotes awareness and participation in DPBRN.

Interest remains high as questions and requests for information about DPBRN continue to come in. Minnesota DPBRN staff created a “welcome to the Network” packet that is sent to all new enrollees, and hosted in mid-September a facilitated training session for new enrollees that has to do with responsible conduct in research/human subjects. Enrollees can choose between the Responsible Conduct in Research Training from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or the University of Miami/Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course. Congratulations to all involved in continuing the success in the Minnesota region!

Continued**Two DPBRN practitioner-investigators were recently inducted as Fellows of the American College of Dentists**

Two DPBRN practitioner-investigators were inducted as Fellows in the American College of Dentists (ACD) during its annual meeting October 15-16, 2008, held this year in San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Allen Kessler, a very active DPBRN practitioner-investigator, was inducted. He is a general dentist in private practice in Fairfield, Alabama. Dr. Patrick Foy, also a very active DPBRN practitioner-investigator, including service as the Executive Committee representative for the DPBRN Minnesota region, was also inducted. He is also a general dentist in private practice, and practices in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Congratulations to them both on this honor!

The ACD is the oldest national honorary organization for dentists. Its members have exemplified excellence through outstanding leadership and exceptional contributions to dentistry and society. In response to serious problems facing the profession, the ACD was founded August 20, 1920 to elevate the standards of dentistry, to encourage graduate study, and to grant Fellowship to those who have done meritorious work. The ACD is non-profit and apolitical, and has long been regarded as the "conscience of dentistry". Its mission is to advance excellence, ethics, professionalism, and leadership in dentistry

FDI NIDCR-Sponsored PBRN Symposium in Stockholm, Sweden

The FDI World Dental Federation held its Annual World Congress meeting September 24-27, 2008 in Stockholm, Sweden. The meeting included a symposium to discuss practice-based research networks (PBRNs) and their potential to answer questions that practitioner-investigators want addressed in their daily clinical practice. The symposium focused on the conduct of oral health research in dental practice from an international perspective. Representatives from PBRNs in Europe and the United States discussed the challenges and opportunities unique to each country and network.

DPBRN was very well-represented by Dr. Per Pålsson, DPBRN practitioner-investigator from Malmö, Sweden. He spoke about the Scandinavian experience with PBRNs. Dr. Don DeNucci, from NIDCR, spoke about the NIDCR perspective on practice-based research. Following an introduction by Dr. Jan Clarkson of the Scottish Dental Practice-Based Research Network, Dr. Van Thompson of the PEARL network provided a U.S. perspective, and Dr. Martin Tickle of the University of Manchester, England discussed lessons learned from the United Kingdom.



Dr. Donald DeNucci of NIDCR provided an overview of the NIDCR-funded PBRN initiative.



Dr. Per Pålsson, DPBRN practitioner-investigator from Malmö, Sweden provided a practitioner-investigator's perspective on DPBRN and the future of dental PBRN research.



The speakers' panel answered questions after their presentations. From left, Dr. Jan Clarkson (standing) of the Scottish Dental Practice-Based Research Network; Dr. Per Pålsson, DPBRN p-i from Malmö, Sweden; Dr. Donald DeNucci, NIDCR PBRN Program Officer; Dr. Martin Tickle of the University of Manchester, England; Dr. Van Thompson of the PEARL dental PBRN.