

# The right to be pain free

Michael Sultan discusses pain

Pain is defined by The World Health Organisation as “an unpleasant sensory or emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage”.

While recognising its existence, what the WHO doesn't mention is that pain is, of course, entirely subjective which is one of the reasons why it is such a challenge and a major global public health issue. We probably know far more about pain and its treatment than ever before, yet there is a disconnection between having that knowledge and using it to treat and manage pain.

I believe passionately that dental professionals in general, and endodontists in particular, should commit to the right of every patient to be free of pain and through our work as compassionate professionals, to understand acute pain management if we are to provide real health and emotional benefits for our patients.

We are approaching the end of the 'global year against acute pain', during which time the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) published a paper that points to inadequate education of healthcare practitioners as one of the main reasons for underestimating the seriousness of, and failing to recognise treatment options for, acute pain.

By increasing our own awareness and understanding of the issues surrounding the assessment and treatment of acute pain, we can in turn, help educate our colleagues in the use of anaesthetics and analgesics so they are better placed to offer information and help to their patients, many of whom are reluctant to use painkillers for fear of unpleasant side effects or even, addiction.

Acute pain is the awareness of noxious signals from damaged tissue and is complicated not only by sensitisation in the periphery but also by changes in the central nervous system. Someone's emotional state can often have a significant influence on pain and increase the level of distress and impact on quality of life. Pain is hugely debilitating and makes life extremely miserable for millions of people every day and there are many underlying cultural, economic and social reasons that should also be taken in to consideration.


I firmly believe that the dental profession must work with the government, policy makers and

campaigners to ensure that every patient has access to pain free dentistry. In some cases this will mean NHS patients will receive treatment from private dental specialists, an issue raised by the Steele report, which suggested

that poorer patients are forced to settle for extractions and dentures rather than tooth preservation, with root canal treatments a preserve of the rich.

While there is no legally en-

shrined right to be pain free, there are those who believe that the internationally established and recognised rights to health include that by implication and inference. We can at least encourage greater awareness, better education and

knowledge sharing as well as raising patient expectations to be pain free. 

## About the author



**Dr Michael Sultan** BDS MSc DFO FICD is a specialist in Endodontics and the Clinical Director of EndoCare. Michael qualified at Bristol University in 1986. He worked as a general dental practitioner for 5 years before commencing specialist studies at Guy's hospital, London.

# At last!... independent proof that The Dental Directory gives High Street Dental Practices the very best prices!

The Dental Directory has long said that it offers High Street dentists the very best overall pricing compared to all other dental dealers. **Now, at last, this can be proved with independently produced evidence!**

The Dental Directory, along with all other major dental dealers, submit their sales out data every quarter to an independent research company, Strategic Data Marketing LLC. They then analyse all of the data on behalf of the large dental product manufacturers.

There can be no doubting this independent data as the prices come from each dealers own sales ledgers.

Strategic Data Marketing LLC. compared the final selling prices of 25 top-selling branded products from the categories shown below. These are the final prices charged to customers, **after all discounts and promotions have been applied**, and they found that The Dental Directory were an average of **5.2%\* cheaper** than our competitors.



Couple this pricing research with free next-day delivery, massive stock holdings and a daily order fulfilment rate of 99.2%, and you can see why thousands of dentists choose to buy from The Dental Directory.

If you want one reliable, single source of supply for all of your professional dental products, you can trust The Dental Directory to deliver on price and service.

Call FREE today on: **0800 585 586**  
or visit: [www.dental-directory.co.uk](http://www.dental-directory.co.uk)

Trust...



for Price & Service

Product categories: Anaesthetics Injectable/Cartridges, Endodontics Files & Reamers Nickel/Titanium Files, Alloys & Accessories Amalgam Capsules, X-Ray Film Intraoral, Evacuation Cleaners, Endodontics Files & Reamers Files, Hand Instruments Surgical Instruments Suture Material, Infection Control Sterilants/Disinfectants Surface Towellets, Impression Trays Disposable Single, Infection Control Sterilising Supplies Pouches, Endodontics Filling Materials & Accessories Heated Gutta Percha Refills, Infection Control Barriers Glasses/Goggles, Small Equipment Prophylaxis Units Inserts, Anaesthetics Needles, Pins Latch & Hand Driven, Hand Instruments Hygiene Instruments Curettes/Scalers Posts Prefabricated Refill, Oral Hygiene Fluoride Rinse, Endodontics Filling Materials & Accessories Gutta Percha Points Impression Materials Alginate.  
\*SDM DPMS Q1, Q2, Q3 2011 average.