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Date 30 March 2004
Your Ref
Our Ref GB/AR/Dent Cons SCOPE
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Dear Mr Gray

Modernising NHS Dentistry in Scotland Consultation

We are writing as members of the Scottish Adult Dental Health Survey Scoping (SADHSS) Group and would like to raise a number of points in response to the Modernising NHS Dentistry consultation.

Our group was convened by the Scottish Dental Epidemiology Co-ordinating Committee to consider the potential for the collection of data on the dental health of adults in Scotland. Information about adult dental health in Scotland is currently limited to that which has been collected in the UK Adult Dental Health Survey, a decennial survey last completed in 1998, and the 1993 Scottish Survey of Adult Dental Health postal questionnaire. The information which is available from these sources is useful for comparisons between UK countries and for long term trends in dental health but is of little use for service planning at a more regional level such as by NHS Board.

We feel that there are valuable opportunities in a modernised NHS dental service for the collection of information about the dental health of adults in Scotland within primary care to inform service planning and development locally. The group feels that this information would be essential for the purposes of local commissioning of services, a key principle within the Consultation document.

Pilot research has demonstrated the feasibility of the collection of epidemiological information on adult dental health by general dental practitioners. When considering how to take forward the payment of dentists in the future, it would be valuable to keep in mind the opportunities that could be developed for the collection of epidemiological information. For example, if it were possible to incorporate a number of mandatory fields for data collection within all clinical assessments conducted in dental primary care a wealth of information could be collected and made available at a local level for planning purposes.



Chair Esther Robertson
Chief Executive George Brechin
Fife NHS Board is the common name of Fife Health Board

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Over the longer term, such information could prove useful to monitor trends in dental health and to derive hypotheses about the efficacy of preventive treatments and longevity of operative procedures. The group believe that fundamental to this opportunity being realised would be the provision of a comprehensive and standardised IT system in primary dental care.

Yours sincerely



Graham Ball
Consultant in Dental Public Health

On behalf of Scottish Adult Dental Health Survey Scoping Group

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