Malaysian Section IADR

MALAYSIA—On March 3, 2006, the International Association for Dental Research (Malaysian Section) changes guard. At the 7th Annual General Meeting held at Balai Ungku Aziz, Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Malaya, outgoing President, Professor Dr. Rosnah Zain handed over the baton to Associate Professor Dr. Noor Hayaty Abu Kasim.

Other outgoing Members included: Dr. Seow Liang Lin (secretary); Associate Professor Dr. Ngeow Wei Cheong (Treasurer), Dr. Zamri Radzi (council members) and Dr. Tutl Ningseh Mohd. Dom (council members).

The full list of the newly elected Executive Members for 2006/08 are as below:

President: Associate Professor Dr. Noor Hayaty Abu Kasim

President Elect: Dr. Rohana Ahmad

Secretary: Dr. Chew Hooi Pin

Treasurer: Dr. Noor Azlin Yahya

Council Members:

Dr. Raghunandan P. P. Menon
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Abu Hassan

Congratulations to all the newly elected Executive Members. Hope they will work harder for the betterment of Malaysian Dental research.

Dental Careers Outlook Something to Smile About

UNITED STATES—Americans’ obsession with their pearly whites has created a tremendous demand for professionally trained dental assistants and dental hygienists.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicts that the dental assistant profession is expected to grow about 42 percent by 2012. This is good news for the thousands of dentists who rely on certified dental assistants or dental hygienists to help with patient care.

Dental assistants, who train in various dental assisting programs across the nation, are usually the first and last people patients see at the dentist’s office. They assist with routine cleanings and dental x-rays, prepare equipment, and perform other tasks requested by the dentist.

“We have come a long way from just scheduling appointments and putting on a patient bib,” said Mary Frohn, CDA, CDPMA, EFDA, B.S., a professor in the Massachusetts Community College Dental Assistant Program. After eleven years working in a clinical setting, Frohn now trains the next generation of dental auxiliary students to enter the field.

“I get great satisfaction from taking students from not knowing anything about dental assisting on their first day of class, to help make them dental career professionals in less than a year,” Frohn said.

Growing trends—including promoting good dental hygiene, increases in cosmetic dentistry, a rising number of employers offering dental insurance and more government-subsidized dental hygiene programs—are all responsible for increasing the demand for dental services and filling seats in her dental assistant program.

Unlike with some jobs that are amiable to on-the-job training, dental assistants should be trained and credentialed to work in the dental assisting profession.

“it’s impossible to learn everything you need to know while you work on the job from eight to five,” said Frohn. “From a consumer aspect, training is necessary because we want to know the auxiliary using radiation on us to take our x-rays, or place a dental sealant, is properly credentialed.”

There are more benefits to being certified than just gaining consumer trust. According to a 2004 survey published by the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB), certified dental assistants stay in the profession for 14.4 years on average and earn more than dental assistants who lack certification.

“A dental assistant with credentials has negotiating power. The more credentials an assistant has, the greater the power in negotiating a fair and equitable salary,” said Betty Finkbeiner in the DANB survey results. Finkbeiner, CDA, RDA, M.S., is chairperson of the Dental Assisting Program at Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Certified dental assistants—who certified by their state board of dental registration, the Dental Assistant National Board, or some other registered dental assistant certifying body—are enjoying the increased demand for their services in a variety of emerging specialized areas. Among them is aesthetic dentistry, which includes bleaching and digital imaging services.

As technology changes the face of dentistry, dental assisting training will become a necessity. Dental assisting schools and dental hygienist programs will continue to provide training to meet the demand for those who want to become a dental assistant. And a promising career is always something to smile about.

For more information about dental assisting schools, visit dental-career.com