November 2012

Dear Dentist,

Re: Collection of extracted teeth for the purpose of undergraduate education.

As you may remember from the days of your own dental undergraduate education, it is essential to gain experience in cutting and restoring dental tissues prior to undertaking patient clinical care. The course at Newcastle continues to use extracted teeth in a number of areas as we still believe that the alternative teeth available fall short by a number of qualities. We therefore ask that our first and second year undergraduates contact their local dental practitioners requesting them to collect extracted teeth to use throughout the course. Ideally we would like to collect sound teeth (extracted through periodontal disease, for example) but carious teeth still provide a very useful teaching tool and we would request that all extracted teeth are collected.

The teeth should be cleaned and stored in a dilute hypochlorite (approximately 0.5%) in a hermetically sealed container. The solution should be changed at regular intervals (once every two weeks). We advise that students pick up the containers and transport them in person. We do not recommend sending the containers through the post, as adherence to The Carriage of Dangerous Goods (Classification, Packaging and Labelling) and Use of Transportable Pressure Receptacles Regulations 1996 is required by law (see end of document for further details).

There has been a great amount of concern around the issue of retaining tissues from patients and the issue of consent surrounding this. We have sought advice from the regulatory body governing this issue (Human Tissue Authority) and thankfully sense has prevailed; the use of anonymous extracted teeth for teaching purposes is not considered an issue. Please see the responses to our questions below:

Query: Extracted teeth from the living are obviously used for education and teaching purposes in the Dental undergraduate curriculum. We presume consent does not need to be given for storage and use of extracted teeth obtained from both the Dental Hospital and General Dental Practitioners to be used for this purpose, especially as the teeth will be anonymous (see Paragraph 25: Code of Practice Consent)
**Response:** Consent is not required for material obtained from a living person and used for the Scheduled purpose of education or training relating to human health

**Query:** Extracted teeth are also used in research and are obtained from the same sources as above. I presume again that research on extracted teeth is covered by paragraph 28 and consent is not required as long as the teeth are anonymised and obviously a favourable ethical opinion is granted.

**Response:** Consent is not required for material (obtained from a living person) that is to be used for an ethically approved project, provided the material is anonymised.

**Query:** Can teeth be sourced from abroad?

**Response:** In exceptional cases it may be possible to bring teeth from abroad. However, I would need to approve this request at least 3 months in advance of tooth collection to ensure that the sourcing and importing of teeth meets national and local guidelines.

Please visit the Human Tissue Authority website for more details by following the link here (http://www.hta.gov.uk/) – Code 8 Section 20 makes it clear that you need to be able to show that sourcing teeth from the United Kingdom was not possible. Further, new guidelines are out for consultation; the amended guidelines suggest that ethical approval and consent be obtained from the country of origin prior to shipping.

Please contact me to discuss this matter further should it be necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Dr James Field, Key Clinical Skills Course Leader

BSc(Hons) BDS MFDS RCSEd MFGDP RCSEng CertClinEd DipEd FHEA PhD

Below is a brief summary of regulations for sending Pathological specimens through the post in the United Kingdom. Those responsible should read the full regulations.

- **Specimens may be sent by a registered medical, dental or veterinary practitioner, nurse or recognised laboratory.**
- **Members of the public CANNOT send Pathological specimens by post, except at the request of one of the above who must provide packaging and instructions in its correct use.**
- **First Class or Datapost must be used.**
- **The primary specimen container must be not more than 50mls in capacity.**
- **Each primary container must be hermetically sealed (air tight) and surrounded by sufficient wadding so as to absorb all possible leaking material.**
- **The primary container and wadding must be sealed in a leak proof plastic bag, and placed in an approved rigid outer container, (in which other primary containers with wadding and plastic bag may also be packed).**
- **The outer container must be labelled "PATHOLOGICAL CONTAINER - FRAGILE WITH CARE" and must show the sender's and recipient's addresses.**