

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mouth Cancer Foundation Website and Online Support Group wins 1st place HITEA 2005 Award for “Best publicly accessible health-related information system”.



The popularity of a unique website providing extensive information and support for victims of head-and-neck cancers and their carers has helped it win this year’s Healthcare IT Effectiveness Award.

The Restorative Dentistry Oncology Clinic website www.rdoc.org.uk - now providing the online presence for the Mouth Cancer Foundation www.mouthcancerfoundation.org - was developed to provide easy access to information on mouth cancers for patients and dentists. The website, features the UK's only patient-led 24-hour online support group on this subject. A key objective of this project was to ensure that the website met the aims of the NHS cancer information strategy. The website is continually developed, in his free time, by Dr Vinod K Joshi, Consultant in Restorative Dentistry at Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Mid Yorkshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. With the voluntary help of Dental-Focus Web Designers, over 200 pages have been created carrying first-hand accounts of patients' experiences, sections on prevention, treatment, complications and risks and a section for healthcare professionals. It has become an internationally recognised resource for patients, carers and health professionals.

Dr Vinod K Joshi, Founder of the Mouth Cancer Foundation, told the HITEA judges: "In the course of my work, I realised that my patients and their dentists needed easier access to information, as well as more-comprehensive information, about oral care and advice before, during and after treatment for head-and-neck cancers; also about early detection, treatment and complications of mouth cancers. It also became apparent that these patients needed a support group."

Further developments are under way to incorporate online translation for

ethnic minorities and to add an interactive educational feature. The success of the site's first three years of operation has enabled the initiation of the Mouth Cancer Foundation, which aims to provide support for patients with cancers of the head and neck and to increase public awareness of the condition.

Judges' comments:

"The judging panel was greatly impressed by the vision and implementation skills necessary to get this project off the ground. This project provides a useful service for patients and healthcare professionals seeking information or advice on neck and head cancer and the panel trusts that Dr Joshi will gain financial support to continue this valuable support for patients with cancers of the head and neck in the future."

END

NOTES FOR EDITORS

For information on the HITEA 2005 Awards, visit:

www.healthcare-computing.co.uk/hitea/

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Mouth cancers have a higher proportion of deaths per number of cases than breast cancer, cervical cancer or skin melanoma. In the UK, there has been a 19% increase in cases from 3,673 in 1995 to 4,400 in 2001 and 13,000 people in the UK are currently living in the shadow of this debilitating disease. An increasing number of young people are being affected and 25% of the cases have no associated significant risk factors. The mortality rate from mouth cancer is just over 50% due to late detection. Despite treatment, there were 1,592 deaths in 2003 – that's approximately one death every 5 hours. Treatment often leaves patients with problems of eating, talking and facial disfigurement. The chances of survival are much improved if the cancer is detected early and rapidly treated. **For more information about mouth cancers visit:**
Mouth Cancer Foundation www.mouthcancerfoundation.org