

Dental education to get an upgrade

By Prafulla Marpakwar/TNN

Mumbai: After nearly six decades, the Dental Council of India (DCI) will revamp the undergraduate and postgraduate courses in dental surgery from the ensuing academic session.

"We have been planning to revamp dental education for a long time and after considerable thought we have decided to bring in a need-based course with large-scale use of modern technology for treatment of dental diseases," Anil Kohli, president of DCI, said.

Kohli said that along with the existing curriculum, it has been proposed to introduce new subjects like denture implantation, cosmetic dentistry, forensic odontology and lesser technology. At the moment, in most cases, artificial dentures are provided to a patient but now a dental surgeon will be able to fix the dentures on a permanent basis. "The dentist will actually implant the dentures, which will be permanent. The treatment will range from one to three months depending on the condition of the patient," Kohli said.

Like forensic medicine, which has been used on a large scale for detection of crimes, it has now been proposed to introduce a new subject—forensic odontology—to probe into specific aspects of crime. "We are sure we will be able to introduce the new subjects from the ensuing academic session," Kohli said.

On the present status of dental sur-

geons, Kohli said that though they were equipped to deal with any kind of emergency, it was still essential to introduce a continuing dental education programme to update their knowledge and professional skills. The Dental Council of India has made it mandatory for all dental surgeons to participate in at least one continuing education programme or face deregistration. "We will soon designate the centres for the continuing education programme and we expect that all dental surgeons will participate in the programme which will range from five days to a month. Such programmes exist in developed countries and dental surgeons have greatly benefited by participating," Kohli added.

Kohli, a dentist of international repute, however expressed concern at the standard of dental education and infrastructure in the government and private dental colleges in India. There are 205 dental colleges in the country. "During our periodic inspections, we find many deficiencies in the colleges. Either the staff is inadequate or infrastructure is poor. We will have to give top priority to these issues to maintain a high standard of dental education," Kohli said.

He added that in certain cases when it was found that the institution had failed to take corrective measures, the DCI either stopped admissions or derecognised the colleges. "In the interest of students, we feel colleges should take corrective measures," Kohli said.

**INNOVATIVE
COURSES**