



MALAYSIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

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22 August 2010

Lt Col Dr Shalene
President
Malaysian Association of Orthodontists

Dear Lt Col Dr Shalene,

**Re: 67th MDA/FDI International Scientific Convention & Trade Exhibition 10-13 June,
Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre**

We refer to your previous correspondence dated 7 June 2010 and 15th July 2010 with regards to the above.

Please be assured the Malaysian Dental Association (MDA) Council takes every apprehension and/or protests raised by its fellow professionals with utmost concern. The Council and the Expert Advisory Panel have deliberated and debated your apprehension; hence we apologize if our reply to you has been a little delay, but we will address your apprehension so as to allay any doubts you may have on the orthodontic-related hands-on courses and lectures presented at the 67th MDA/FDI (World Dental Federation) convention.

As MAO may be aware, through the years the MDA and all its affiliates have had held fast to its aspirations to maintain the honour and interest of the dental profession. In line with the directives from the Ministry of Health, MDA has continued to support and promote a high standard of ethics and professional conduct amongst all Malaysian dentists. These principles hold true in our efforts to offer the best quality Continuous Education Programmes. As you maybe aware it is only through Continuous Education Programmes that our young Dental Students and matured Dental Professionals are able to make educational choices to further excel themselves to world-class standard, which is also the objective of our Ministry of Health through its various Healthcare Tourism programmes. **(Please be assured a Certificate of Attendance for a 2-3 hour course/lecture does not constitute a professional certificate of practice.)**

The MDA/FDI Scientific Convention, organised through innovation and hard work by fellow professional members, has grown to cover a range of dental topics and is now one of the leading educational convention for dentists in Malaysia, regionally and now has attracted professionals from the UK, New Zealand, USA, etc.

In this case, the orthodontic CPD programme was planned as an update in a particular clinical area, as this helps both specialists and general dentists develop practical

understanding and strengthen their identity as independent and responsible professionals.

All speakers and programmes are stringently vetted by the Scientific and Education committees of the MDA, fully supported by the FDI World Dental Federation.

In an effort to address this issue without prejudice, the MDA has carried out a general survey amongst its members. This included general dental practitioners (GDPs) and specialists in the various dental fields, including orthodontists. We have taken the liberty to compile a summary of key opinions which were expressed:

- MAO has no regulatory control over the practice of orthodontics in Malaysia as not all orthodontists in Malaysia are members of MAO or must have compulsory membership to practice as an orthodontist.
- In any course offered to dentists, both locally or internationally, the organisers reserve the right to offer and admit participants upon payment of a registration fee to attend lectures or hands-on courses for continuous professional development (CPD).
- A CPD course, even by renowned speakers, is never intended or carried out with the aim of making dentists believe that any treatment in dentistry is simple! It is therefore naive of any dentist (GPs or Specialists to even consider that by attending the 3 hour hands-on course on bone screw on TYPODONT models would automatically embark on treating complicated clinical cases with no risk!
- MAO can be restrictive on its own CPD courses or hands-on courses, and be selective on its participants, but to extend this control beyond their association is simply inappropriate. MDA as a national body of dentists should continue with its CPD programmes in all fields including orthodontics as it forms part of learning in dentistry. How are dentists, as primary care givers, able to offer treatment advice to patients if they are not exposed to updates in all specialty fields in dentistry?
- The issue of dentists without appropriate qualifications or training in orthodontics undertaking treatment of patients needs to be addressed by MAO by educating the public and GDPs on the risk/benefit of orthodontic care. Dentists should be made aware that inappropriate orthodontic treatment may result in litigation and MAO should work with GDPs on orthodontic referrals.
- We have all the grievance mechanism under the PHFSA 1998, which should convince the MAO that the consumer is protected. It is indeed demeaning and demoralizing to come to a stage whereby GDPs are told what they can and cannot learn, infringing their rights, and freedom of choice to progress/seek knowledge. Please do not invade the basic human rights of all dentists to seek knowledge.

- It is short-sighted and selfish to restrict GDPs' orthodontic knowledge. How does the MAO plan on serving a nation of 25 million people with merely 100 over orthodontists? At the end of the day, it is the Malaysian public who will suffer.
- Instead of ignoring and alienating the GDPs who have a keen interest in orthodontics in their personal development plan, the MAO should make more effort to educate them regarding orthodontic treatment which can be safely carried out, whilst increasing awareness regarding cases which should be referred for specialist care.

If, any, we can see more benefits to both MAO and MDA arising from conducting such CPD, as it brings our awareness of new techniques and brings about interests in speciality fields, such as orthodontics among the dentists.

Whilst we have the utmost respect for the MAO and its views, the MDA must take into consideration the opinions of its members regarding this particular issue. Through much consultation and discussion, the general consensus is in favour of the MDA continuing to organize high quality, evidence-based professional education programmes which cover all dental specialties.

Therefore, MDA as a national body of dentists shall continue with its CPD programmes as it strives for excellence in the practice of dentistry and improve the quality of dental CPD. Most dentists now regularly attend CPD courses given by both local and foreign experts. This increase was brought about by the determined efforts of MDA in partnership with FDI and Ministry of Health Malaysia.

We at MDA, sincerely hope that the MAO will take into account the democratic voice of our members and we look forward to resolving this issue in order to focus on serving the esteemed members of both our associations.

It is hoped that the MAO will use the MDA as a platform for further discourse and engagement with GDPs. After all, MDA aims to foster and preserve unity amongst the Malaysian dental profession as a whole. We, therefore, urge MAO to strive together with us and we ardently look forward to a working together with MAO in the near future for the benefit of the Dental Industry.

By Order of Council

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 Dr How Kim Chuan
 President

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 Dr Muzafar Hamirudin
 President-Elect

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 De Neoh Gim Bok
 Hon General Secretary

Cc:

1. Honorable Minister of Health Dato' Sri Liow Tiong Lai
2. Director General of Health Tan Sri Dato' Dr Ismail Merican
3. Oral Health Director Dato' Dr Norain Abu Talib