

Pain free dental work?

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Dentists are trying to coax 40 million frightened Americans back into the chair with a mix of technology and psychology designed to take most of the pain out of tooth care.

Among the new tools: friendlier drills and needle-free anesthesia to muscle relaxation and virtual reality.

"Years ago, dentists were trained to treat teeth and they forgot there was a patient attached to them," said Dr. Kimberly Harms, an adviser to the American Dental Association who practices in Farmington, Minn.

In modern America, comfort is critical, she said, "and the marketplace is taking hold of that."

At the recent annual meeting of the ADA, 35,000 dental workers are getting firsthand knowledge of new pain-reducing products like Noven Pharmaceuticals' DentiPatch, a Bandaid-like patch that sends numbing lidocaine into the gums without a needle.

But fighting fear can require more than gadgets. About 50 specialized "dentophobia clinics" have sprung up nationwide, and dental schools are teaching dentists to become therapists, cheerleaders and doctors all in one.

Phobia dentists spend months helping patients conquer fear before touching a tooth. They administer Valium to patients too shaky to walk into the office. They teach patients muscle relaxation and guided imagery — sometimes even resorting to hypnosis — because tense muscles feel more



pain, and muscles relax as the mind does.

Only after patients become treatable do the phobia dentists pull out their new arsenal: anesthetics with less or even no needle pain, an air drill that sandblasts cavities without the usual terrifying whine, a new pain-free laser drill, even virtual-reality glasses to distract patients.

Stephen Diana says if he had known about the new approach, he might not have avoided dentists for 20 years and lost half his teeth to gum disease.

"I'm an educated person, and I did not realize that this stuff was available now," said Diana, of Ronkonkoma, N.Y., who needed three months of phobia therapy, a tranquilizer and the DentiPatch

to conquer his fear of dental needles. "I had 13 teeth extracted and got through it without turning into a gibbering idiot."

An estimated 40 million Americans are so afraid of dentistry that they avoid or postpone dental visits. As many as half are what dental phobia expert Dr. Mark Slovin calls extreme cases — avoiding dentists at all costs for years.

"We have to make ourselves known" so that phobia sufferers can be treated, said Slovin, head of the State University of New York's Stony Brook dental phobia clinic.

Dentists say they're still fighting the stereotype of Steve Martin's sadistic tooth-driller in "Little Shop of Horrors."

Doctors optimistic about Crohn's

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — Injections of an antibody that targets a natural human protein are showing promise in hard-to-treat cases of Crohn's disease, a chronic digestive illness.

The treatment involves injections of an antibody called cA2. It neutralizes a protein known as tumor necrosis factor that is thought to play a role in causing Crohn's disease.

The Associated Press first reported the development last year when it was presented at a medical conference in San Francisco. The study is now being published in today's issue

of the New England Journal of Medicine.

The treatment, which is not yet approved for routine use, was developed by Centocor Inc. of Malvern, Pa. The company financed the study, which was conducted on 108 patients by Dr. Stephen R. Targan and colleagues from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Crohn's disease is an inflammation of the digestive tract. Symptoms can include diarrhea, pain, fever and weight loss. Some patients need surgery to remove damaged parts of their intestines.

All of the patients in the

study had moderate to severe disease and had failed to respond to standard medicines.

A month after treatment, two-thirds getting cA2 showed considerable improvement, and half of those who improved got so much better that doctors considered them to be in remission. After three months, the effects had begun to wear off, but 41 percent of the patients were still significantly better.

The treatment appears to carry no significant side effects. The researchers caution that more testing will be necessary to see how long improvements last and to study the effects of repeat injections.

Beef bacteria meets match

By Tara Meyer THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GRIFFIN, Ga. — The bad bug of beef may have met its exterminator.

Michael Doyle, one of the nation's top experts on E. coli 0157:H7, has found that bacteria from a cow's own gut can stop it cold — a discovery that may lead to a product that eliminates the bug before cattle are sent to slaughter.

"If we could give cows a dose of a product to clear out their systems of E. coli 0157, there should be less meat contaminated that goes into the retail market," said Michael Doyle, a food scientist at the University of Georgia.

E. coli 0157:H7 is a rare type of the common E. coli bacteria that live in human and animal intestines. Undercooked beef tainted with pathogen has sickened hundreds of people since it was identified in 1982.

An outbreak in Colorado prompted a historic recall of 25 million pounds of ground beef in August and forced the government to re-examine ways to keep meat safe, including radiation.

E. coli lives in a cow's stomach, so the man who grew up on a Wisconsin dairy farm had a simple strategy:

He discovered that several types of bacteria inside the cow make their own repellent against E. coli 0157. He isolated them from cattle droppings and tissue, grew them and fed the bacteria to calves.

The bacteria not only wiped out the pathogen in one group of calves within three weeks, they also kept E. coli 0157 from invading a second group that didn't have it, said Doyle, who runs the Center for Food Safety and Quality Enhancement in this town 35 miles south of Atlanta.

Food safety experts have taken notice of Doyle's work. The Food and Drug Administration, which oversees veterinary medicine, met with him last month to discuss its potential, he said.

"This type of technology is exactly what we need if we are going to keep the bacteria out of the food supply," said Caroline Smith Dewaal, director of food safety for the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "We need to have farmers address the bacteria before the cattle go to slaughter."

Dale Hancock, a veterinarian and epidemiologist at Washington State University who has studied E. coli 0157 since 1989, said cattle producers may have no choice but to try a novel approach.

"There are a lot of cattle producers who don't perceive themselves to be part of the problem," said Hancock. "Right now, there's nothing to tell them."

Neighborhoods key to health

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — Safe neighborhoods, and not just access to good medical care, would improve the health of North Carolina's minority communities, a group of residents told state officials.

The state Office of Minority Health had asked community leaders for input on how the agency could do a better job.

More than 300 people accepted the offer Saturday, but they didn't talk much about medicine. Instead, they spoke long and loud about social, economic and spiritual pathologies that threaten health.

"In every single neighborhood

there is drug dealing going on," said Luis Alvarenga, director of La Casa Multicultural. "That is bringing this viciousness in."

Alvarenga said the recent increase in robberies of Latinos in Durham is connected to other problems in the inner city. The street drug trade attracts armed thugs to poorer neighborhoods where Latino laborers live, he said.

The conference participants filled page after page of bright orange sheets with advice on how state officials could better help people. When they were done, they demanded action.

"I suggest we do this annually

and check to see if the state follows up on the recommendations," Mary Beamon of the Wake County chapter of North Carolina Fair Share suggested near the end of the day. "If they don't, we can reiterate them."

Participants from across the state suggested everything from eliminating the food tax to putting counseling stations next to police substations in poor neighborhoods.

Doctors must view violence as a public health threat, said Dr. Paul R. G. Cunningham, a surgeon and trauma director at the East Carolina University School of Medicine.

"A MAMMO WHAT?"

A MAMMOGRAM. Although it sounds like a telegram from MOM, it's really just an X-RAY of your breasts. Now I know you're NOT CRAZY about doctors. But even if you check your breasts every month for changes, A MAMMOGRAM IS THE ONE THING THAT CAN FIND A LUMP LONG BEFORE YOU CAN FEEL IT. SO ONCE YOU REACH FOR Y, GET A MAMMOGRAM EVERY YEAR, BECAUSE TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS BEGINS WITH TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF.

GET A MAMMOGRAM. TELL A FRIEND.



2115 E. Seventh Street Suite 102 Charlotte, N.C. 28204 (704)372-3126

701 E. Roosevelt Boulevard Suite 200 A Monroe, N.C. 28112 (704)282-8276

GMA

CAROLINA MEDICAL ASSOCIATES and Dr. AVINASH D. SHAH are pleased to welcome Dr. VIJAY K. JUNEJA to our medical practice

ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS Participating in Medicare and 30 Managed Care Plans Specializing in Oncology/Hematology and Internal Medicine

STAY HEALTHIER THIS FALL. STOP BY MY PHARMACY FOR YOUR FLU SHOT and a FREE PRIMETIME® GIFT PACK

FLU SHOTS

OCTOBER 23, 10:00am - 2:00pm
OCTOBER 29, 12:00pm - 4:00pm

COST: \$10.00*

*FLU shots are free to Medicare Part B recipients. You must show your Medicare Part B card to be eligible.



HOWARD GAINES, Jr. R.Ph.



The Medicine Shoppe

6021-C The Plaza (704)537-0191



BIG LEAGUE SPORTS ARE HERE



WHICH WILL COME FIRST?

SUPERBOWL? CHARLOTTE N.B.A. CHAMPIONSHIP?

WE'RE ON OUR WAY

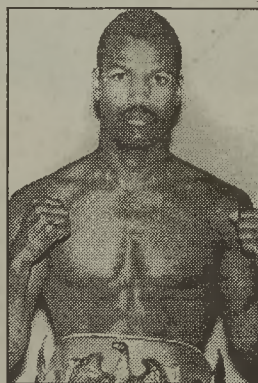


YET



YOU CAN COUNT ON US

BUT WE'VE ALREADY HAD A WORLD CHAMPION BOXER, KELVIN SEABROOKS,



KELVIN SEABROOKS COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR

HIS CHIROPRACTOR DR. WATTS



DR. DENNIS WATTS, D.C.

OF A & W CLINIC, HELPS KEEP KELVIN'S BACK IN SHAPE

IF YOUR BACK OR NECK IS INJURED

CALL 393-3333

WITH 3 OFFICES ON: BEATTIES FORD • WILKINSON • 901-B Wendover OUR STAFF WILL TREAT YOU LIKE A WORLD CHAMPION