HKU Faculty of Dentistry establishes Oral Medicine Clinic

The HKU Faculty of Dentistry has recently opened an Oral Medicine Clinic at the Prince Philip Dental Hospital to take care of patients who have conditions affecting the mouth and jaws that do not require surgery.

Located on the second floor of the Prince Philip Dental Hospital, the Oral Medicine Clinic focuses on diagnosing and treating non-surgical cases of oral diseases. Examples are diseases affecting the lining of the mouth (such as sores that may later develop into cancer), pain in and around the mouth, and diseases of the salivary glands.

Staffed by Dr Li-wu Zheng (Clinical Assistant Professor in Oral Medicine), the Oral Medicine Clinic is different from and therefore complements other clinics of the Faculty. Unlike the recently opened Centre for Advanced Dental Care, the Oral Medicine Clinic does not deal with tooth disorders, and unlike the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery clinics, it does not admit surgical patients. “For most cases of diseases and pain that are encountered at the Oral Medicine Clinic, drug treatment rather than surgery will be the major approach,” says Dr Zheng. “However, if cancer is detected or if surgical intervention is necessary, patients will be referred for surgery.”

The Oral Medicine Clinic also deals with disorders of the mouth that are linked to diseases affecting the body as a whole, such as bloodstream infections, diabetes, and long-term kidney disease. “The mouth really is the window to the body,” adds Dr Zheng. “Our disease management approach is comprehensive and crosses different disciplines in dentistry. For example, our clinic works closely with the Disciplines of Periodontology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Oral Radiology, and Oral Biosciences.” The Oral Medicine Clinic is under the administration of the Faculty Discipline Area of Oral Diagnosis and Polyclinics.

Oral Medicine is a well-developed specialty area within dentistry in the United States and United Kingdom. Teaching and clinical staff in Oral Medicine are doubly qualified medically and dentally, or medically qualified and dentally trained, or dentally qualified and medically trained.

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For more information about Dr Li-wu Zheng, visit <http://facdent.hku.hk/about/academicstaff_info.php?sid=d0055&year=2010>. For more information about the HKU Faculty of Dentistry, visit <http://facdent.hku.hk>.

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