Team Dentistry in July

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July… named for Julius Caesar…the Roman Emperor (turned Dictator) 102 to 44 BC who was also such a successful General, winning many battles …. has been a month of confrontation on the sports fields. Not quite "battles" but the analogy is clear. I wonder whether forensic dentistry was required in that infamous Suarez bite on the football field?…but the rivalry was also intense in the tennis, the cricket, the Durban July, the Formula One. .. and the rugby! The outcomes were often determined by what at first appeared to be an insignificant move, decision, or reaction. If the head had been turned two degrees more, the deflected ball would have gone into the net! If the jockey had plied the whip two seconds earlier the race would have been won!!

The old proverbial rhyme springs to mind:
For want of a nail the shoe was lost
For want of a shoe the horse was lost
For want of a horse the rider was lost
For want of a rider the message was lost
For want of a message the battle was lost
For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail!

In Chaos theory this sequence is known as the *"butterfly effect"* and relates to sensitive dependence on small differences (Wikipaedia… a butterfly flapping its wings in Germany results weeks later in a storm in Brazil!!!).

There are probably few professions or occupations where this situation is more applicable on a day to day basis than Dentistry. It is the meticulous attention to clinical detail that ensures the greatest success, it is the tiny gesture that encourages a patient, it is the almost imperceptible nod of appreciation that builds the strength of the team. Perhaps it may be the latter that contributes most to the progress of Dentistry, for the combined and coordinated efforts of all members is the foundation for a happy and productive practice.

The latest formal addition to the team has been decided, mostly unilaterally, by the HPCSA. Chairside Assistants, although already informal and welcome members of the team, are to be registered and their mandatory credentials have been determined and promulgated. The Association intends to appeal against the court judgement which determined that the HPCSA intentions should be supported. The moratorium on meeting all requirements has, however, been extended to March 2016.

In a similar manner there has now been signed into law the requirement that all practices must hold a valid Certificate of Need. Much is still vague about the actual implementation of the provisions of the National Health Act 2003, but at least at this stage it must be accepted that the profession will have to comply. A decision taken at high levels which will indubitably impact on Team Dentistry.

The Manager and the Coach have thus imposed strictures on the team, and the Players Representative (SADA) has gone in to bat. The final outcome may indeed be determined by a small detail ….but dare we remember that Julius Caesar was in the long run, assassinated!

A further change in Team Management affects the Journal directly for a new Editorial Board is to be appointed…. and our long serving members of the current Board deserve our sincere appreciation for their dedication, their commitment and their patience.. they have appeared on our Contents Page for several years! The new Board has been constituted to represent as far as possible all Schools and all Dental Disciplines. The Journal has already received constructive and enthusiastic feedback and suggestions from new members and the Association looks forward to some vigorous input.

Perhaps Team Dentistry warrants a Mexican Wave from all those in Stadium South Africa!



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