Sex, drugs and alcohol

Amongst the misconceptions, or ‘urban legends’, that exist in dental practice is the potential for an unwanted pregnancy because of an interaction between the antibiotics we prescribe and oral contraceptives. The lack of evidence for this interaction has resulted in a change in overseas guidelines and we should be advising our patients accordingly.

Dentists should discuss with patients potential problems with any adverse reaction to prescribed medicines, particularly diarrhoea or vomiting. If they develop any reaction or are otherwise concerned, they should be told to cease the drug and contact us as the prescribing clinician, or their doctor, as soon as possible.

Of particular note for dentists is the interaction between alcohol and metronidazole. We should warn our patients of this possibility and recommend that they abstain from alcohol.

Conflict of interest: none declared