

SILVER SMILES

TALK ABOUT discoveries in the medical disciplines, and most of us will stand in awe of the West. Very few actually believe that Malaysians also have the capacity to do the same, if given the necessary support and encouragement.

Dr Radhakrishnan and his partner, Razak Yahya, of Dunia Perwira Sdn Bhd are at the threshold of creating dental history. If their current research and development on a new dental filling comes through, they will be the first people to formulate a dental filling that is totally made up of silver.

Dental fillings in common use comprise tin, copper and silver. The alloy is then mixed with mercury to form an amalgam (paste for filling). Radhakrishnan claims that his new amalgam is mercury-free and more resistant to corrosion (rusting in the mouth). Tin and copper are prone to corrosion, he says. The current dental amalgam is banned by Swedish dental authorities for use on pregnant women as mercury in the alloy has been shown to cause genetic defects in the foetus.

Radhakrishnan and a few of his associates have used the new dental 'alloy' (not really an alloy because it consists only of silver) for the last 14 months on approximately 700 patients. And to date, he says that he has not received a single complaint from patients who are closely monitored.

Radhakrishnan says that his new amalgam complies with British dental standards. The product was sent for testing recently at City University, London. A major local institution of higher learning has also recently accepted the product as a study project. Radhakrishnan desires a local endorsement for his new product before commercialising it. 'It is Malaysian technology as it was not bought from abroad.'

He says a government endorsement will definitely be a boost to new inventions and ideas because it shows that the product is something to be taken seriously. Radhakrishnan says that he already has contract orders from local public hospitals for his new product.

The current paid-up capital for Dunia Perwira is 150,000 rgt. Radhakrishnan says that it is not reflective of the investment that has been put into it. Plans are in the pipeline to increase the paid-up capital in the future.

Dunia Perwira moved into TPM recently. Radhakrishnan has high praise for the tech park. In addition to gaining encouragement and moral support, TPM has also helped him to source loans to finance R&D work and provided the necessary business and technology contacts for him.

Commencing on the name of 'Dunia Perwira' as a dental filling manufacturer, Radhakrishnan says he might change it to Denfil, which is the commercial name of his new product, 'People might mistake the company as one that sells arms.'

He agrees that Denfil might just get the company better goodwill. Dunia Perwira was established in May 1988, but did not 'officially function' until September 1989.

Radhakrishnan trained in Bombay, India. He quit active dental practice in 1984 to concentrate on this venture. His partner, Razak is a former high ranking civil servant.

With operations in the commencing stage of production, both partners can look forward to good money rolling in.