

Letters

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ANOTHER DENTAL NURSE CRYING FOR HELP

Dear Editor,

After reading your recent article on dental nurse salaries,¹ I thought why not share my insight and feelings.

I go to work daily with a smile on my face, happy to help patients, but inside my mind runs at a million miles an hour. I feel deeply demotivated after reading this article and others due to how undervalued we are despite the amount of work we put into our studies and day to day duties. Essentially, what's the point in dedicating so much to be brushed off like dirt? Why are people afraid to challenge this topic? Why do we not have any organisation to protect us against this type of exploitation?

My biggest regret is giving everything up I had before to follow what I loved, realising the disgraceful pay scale of being a dental nurse. It's absolutely insulting, degrading and shameful to get minimum wage and a lack of recognition after all the effort we put in. I alone have known 21 people that have left dental nursing in the last 11 months directly because of the issues described in this article which is SHOCKING!

In my time over and above my nursing duties, I have utilised my skills to translate for

it's fine as I need my job. This is astonishing to me as without the staff there would be no practice.

I could go on, my point being I earn less than £8,000 a year and barely have enough

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the dentist as I speak various languages which again is taken for granted and I funded my own course.

I work in a practice that is 'Gold Standard' and charges patients a fortune yet all the employees complain how badly paid they are including the practice manager, while the dentist continuously talks about what fancy holiday she's taking next, new house she bought abroad and how expensive the private tuition is for her kids. I have to endure mild sexual harassment daily and say

to put food on the table after basic living costs with my monthly wage; it's disgusting that the BDA and GDC don't regulate or help this problem by setting a pay band or at least make a decent wage scale for dentists to stop their exploitation. Brexit is around the corner; what happens when prices go up (which they will) and how will people survive for basic necessities? Why can't all nurses be regulated and get a decent wage?

Rubbish collector, shop assistant, street sweeper, bar tender - among many other jobs - all earn a lot more than dental nurses without any studies or skills. The exploitation in dentistry is beyond me.

I feel more articles should be published warning new trainee dental nurses of these issues and giving them accurate information before they jump into this very poorly paid industry.

Anonymous

If you would like to comment further on this issue please send us an email or visit the BDJ Team Facebook page www.facebook.com/bdjteam.

1. Why are dental nurse salaries so low? *BDJ Team* 2016; 3: 152. Available at: <http://www.nature.com/articles/bdjteam2016152>.



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