

Ed's letter



Have dental nurses been fairly treated during the COVID-19 pandemic? If you are a dental nurse, has your career, your income and your mental health been affected? According to the authors of the cover story this month, when a survey of over 1,000 dental nurses was conducted in September 2020, almost half (49%) of respondents said that COVID-19 has had a negative effect on their finances and 32% report difficulty paying their GDC registration fee.

As this paper points out, the impact COVID-19 has had on dentists has been well publicised - but little has been heard about dental nurses, despite the fact that many were redeployed to work elsewhere in the NHS [even though they're not entitled to NHS benefits].

'Dental nurses are indispensable members of the dental team,' say authors Matthew Dingle and Colette Balmer. 'It is worrying to see such high levels of dissatisfaction within their profession.'

I hope that the majority of *BDJ Team* readers have not experienced serious financial hardships or felt compelled to leave dentistry because of the pandemic. If you would like to share your experience with other readers, please comment on the Facebook page or send me a message.

As we reach one year since the pandemic began, there has been a growing focus on mental health and wellbeing. Recently, a special resource for the dental team was published to help individuals to access support. We find out more about *Wellbeing support for the dental team* this March from a member of the collaborative who created it, Shalini Nayee.

Also this month, Laura Hinds explores ethnicity and dentistry; Savanna Joyce reflects on whether she made the right decision, as a dental therapist, to become a dentist; and I was delighted to interview dental hygienist Sarah Hill about her career to date and her new role as DCP Board Observer for the FGDP(UK).

Dental nurse Jo Dawson also tells us about her campaign to discourage children from eating dried fruit as snacks. I look forward to further updates from Jo as her campaign progresses.

Kate

Kate Quinlan
Editor
k.quinlan@nature.com

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41407-021-0561-8>



THE TEAM

Cover
©FG Trade/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Editor-in-Chief
Stephen Hancocks OBE

Editor
Kate Quinlan

Production
Art Editor: Melissa Cassem
Production Editor: Sandra Murrell

Advertising
European Team Leader
- Academic Journals:
Andy May, +44 (0)20 7843 4785,
a.may@nature.com

Publishing
Publisher: James Sleigh
British Dental Journal
The Campus
4 Crinan Street
London N1 9XW

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