

Ed's letter

The British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) was delighted to be invited to sponsor this issue of *BDJ Team*, continuing the Society's commitment to empowering and supporting dental hygienists, dental therapists and their colleagues in practice and education.

It has been a big year in dentistry for dental hygienists and dental therapists and, most recently on this journey, initial changes to the NHS dental contract in England have been announced.

Whilst there are several areas of interest, there is a section of particular significance to us at the BSDHT regarding issuing guidance that clarifies how skill mix and direct access in NHS practice can be used whilst working within the framework of existing regulations.

We know that many dental hygienists and dental therapists providing care for patients under the NHS contract would like to work to a full scope using all the skills they have, to the benefit of their patients, so this seems positive, as long as they will be fairly and appropriately remunerated.

Integral to our efforts to ensure dental hygienists and dental therapists are supported and empowered during any changes that may come their way, articles contained in this special issue are designed to offer all team members support to look after themselves and their patients to the best of their ability.

Whilst articles offer a wonderful window to novel ideas and concepts, they also offer a springboard to new interests and educational opportunities. Dental conferences and exhibitions run throughout the year and offer such a wide variety of exciting prospects.

For example, the impact that an event like the forthcoming Oral Health Conference in Manchester on 25–26 November cannot be underestimated in educational terms, as well as being confidence-building, motivational, and offering that much needed but often overlooked emotional support.

With that in mind, the title of the event is 'It's the business!', with the main focus on supporting dental hygienists and dental therapists in developing business opportunities for themselves, achieving autonomy and job satisfaction as their careers progress.

At the BSDHT, we also encourage skill mix and recognise the benefits of a team approach, and so the conference has something for all members of the dental team.

The programme and other conference features are now live at bsdht.org.uk/ohc-2022, including hands-on sessions that are aimed at dental therapists that will be a good first step to develop or refine restorative-based skill.

On top of the learning opportunities, there really is nothing better than seeing friendly faces, reminding us that we are not alone, and enjoying the company of like-minded colleagues who truly care about offering the best in oral health to patients.

We'd love to see you there, so simply visit bsdht.org.uk/ohc-2022 to see how your last weekend in November could take a serious turn for the better!

Diane Rochford, President, BSDHT

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THE TEAM

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