

At the OHC you're spoilt for choice!

British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) member **Emma Bingham** says that the annual Oral Health Conference (OHC) has supported her educationally and personally.

I was a student when I first attended a conference which was then organised by the British Dental Hygienists' Association (BDHA). Naively at that time, I wasn't too sure what I *would* get out of attending the event. Fast-forward over 20 years (I know I don't look old enough!) and that couldn't be further from the truth.

The Oral Health Conference (OHC) is a must-attend event for dental hygienists and dental therapists. Each year there is a jam-packed programme of specially selected clinical education and CPD opportunities, meaning that there is always something that will interest you. Particularly over the last five years, I've found the OHC has supported me educationally and personally. Educationally, with the vast amount of CPD the OHC has to offer, honestly, you are spoilt for choice.

Stand out presentations for me from Glasgow in 2021 include Claire Stevens CBE from the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry and her keynote address on 'Paediatric dentistry in a brave new world: A vision for children's oral health'. Her presentation was incredibly powerful and thought provoking, not least because she showed a picture of over 100 teeth that she extracted during a morning GA session!

Professor Avijit Banerjee, who is a tremendous advocate for dental hygienists and dental therapists, spoke passionately about 'Minimum intervention oral health care management – the role of the oral healthcare team'. Back in 2018, the OHC was in Telford.

One of the highlights from this conference was the plenary session with Professor StJohn Crean from the University of Central Lancashire. His presentation was titled 'Exploring the impact of medical challenges on periodontal health', and if you haven't heard Prof Crean speak before you are most definitely missing out.

Aside from the excellent CPD, the conference brings together a vast array of trade organisations. From new scrubs to loupes, from the latest technology in fighting the biofilm to those all-important toothpaste samples, you'll need to bring an extra suitcase to carry your supplies home. All joking aside though, the trade really does support our profession exceptionally well and the OHC provides plenty of opportunity for finding out about what is new in the dental world.

During the two-day event I enjoy taking some time out to view the fabulous poster competition. The array of submissions firmly cements with me what amazing work our profession does, and it's about time we shouted about it. Posters submitted in the past have been audits, literature reviews, patient case studies, projects, and research. The poster competition is a showcase of just a small snippet of what dental hygienists and dental therapists work towards daily and great evidence of what important members of the dental team we really are.

One of the highlights of the OHC is the party night; BSDHT members sure know how to party! The evening provides members with the opportunity to spend time with others in a relaxed environment and enjoy a



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superb meal and entertainment. These events can be very lively; I've witnessed impromptu renditions of popular songs and even a full-on conga around the venue! It's such a great way to unwind after the first day of the conference.

For as long as I can remember I've attended the OHC with my bestie. It's a great place for meeting up with colleagues or even building new friendships. This year for the first time I will be attending on my own as my bestie has now retired. When I say on my own, that's really not true, because I'll be surrounded by around 500 like-minded, extraordinary, oral health experts so I know I'll be absolutely fine.

For more information about the OHC, which takes place on 25–26 November 2022 in Manchester, visit <https://www.bsdht.org.uk/ohc-2022/>.

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