



# Ed's letter



I don't escape my desk very often but yesterday was lucky enough to attend the launch of this year's National Smile Month (NSM), which runs from 15 May until 15 June 2023. The annual charity campaign organised by the Oral Health Foundation champions the benefits of having good oral health and promoting the value of a healthy smile. Of course, as dental professionals you spread oral health messages all year round, but NSM is 'a chance to reach people in the heart of your community', particularly those where oral disease is far too common.

Speakers at the launch event pointed out that the average UK reading age is just nine years old, placing an emphasis on how straightforward, simple messages about oral health are key. This year's NSM theme is 'Brush for better health'. The campaign points out that one-in-three people do not brush twice a day while one-in-four regularly skip brushing. The Oral Health Foundation would like everyone involved with the dental industry to help show people how to brush their teeth effectively, and you can find many helpful tips, resources, events and competitions on the charity's website: <https://www.dentalhealth.org/national-smile-month>.

Our cover star this month has a beautiful smile, but she is of course a dental nurse, and an entrepreneur to boot. Polly co-owns a chain of dental practices in the West Midlands employing more than 180 people, and has just received accreditation to run a training academy, much to her delight.

This story of a dental nurse who has gone on to great things is common to *BDJ Team*. Yet why do some less satisfied dental nurses stay in unsatisfactory jobs? Rebecca Silver investigates. Meanwhile Fiona Ellwood focuses on skill mix for dental nurses.

Thushara Thayaparan explores inhalation sedation and the dental team; we have two further DCP research summaries; and we present a new series on dental ethics, and part 2 in our Neurodiversity and dentistry series, this month looking at oral health considerations.

I would love to hear about your dental practice's activities during National Smile Month, and will look out for your 'smiley' pictures online!

Kate

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