

## DAY IN THE LIFE OF A DENTAL SPECIALIST

## 'I love the immediate results of oral surgery'

**Ayisha Davies-House, 35**, is a Specialist Oral Surgeon at Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise/Peninsula Dental School. Ayisha qualified BDS from the University of Bristol and holds MJDF (RCS Edinburgh), PGCE Clinical Education (University of Bedfordshire) and Membership in Oral Surgery (RCS Edinburgh). Ayisha lives in Devon with her husband, an orthodontist, and their three-year-old daughter.



**I** get up whenever my daughter does! If I'm lucky, it's around 7 am. By the time my daughter is up, ready, and out to pre-school, breakfast usually consists of a cereal bar and cup of tea in the car on the way to work.

I'm originally from Abersychan, a tiny village in South Wales close to the Welsh Valleys, but we decided to relocate from Liverpool to Devon post-COVID to live by the sea following the birth of our daughter.

It takes me half an hour to drive to work. We relocated to the Southwest to improve our quality of life and reducing our commute to work was vital. During my oral surgery specialty training, I commuted between Liverpool and Lancaster, which was a three-hour round trip and wasn't sustainable long-term.

the oral surgery clinics and provide treatment under sedation one day a week. The service works closely with Peninsula Dental School, and I provide direct clinical teaching to undergraduate and postgraduate students attending the MSc in Oral Surgery. As my post is based within a social enterprise there is an emphasis on community engagement, and I am often involved in the management of patients in recovery from substance misuse. These cases are incredibly rewarding as you play a role in the patient's journey of rehabilitation and getting their life back on track. I also provide training to doctors involved with BASMU (the British Antarctic Survey Medical Unit), ensuring that they have some basic skills and knowledge of oral surgery before commencing their remote work in Antarctica.

quickly realised that general dental practice wasn't for me and that I enjoyed oral surgery. I undertook my first year of dental core training (DCT1) in an oral and maxillofacial surgery unit in Exeter and subsequently had the opportunity to live and work in Western Australia for a year. I was able to combine this with travelling around New Zealand and Southeast Asia, ticking off lots of my bucket list along the way. I decided to return to the UK to pursue speciality training in oral surgery and undertook two further years of dental core training (DCT2 and DCT3) in Liverpool before applying to national recruitment. I was successful and completed my three-year training programme at the Lancaster Royal Infirmary. My daughter was born during the last year of training which also coincided with the emergence of COVID and this resulted in me sitting my exit examination (Membership in Oral Surgery) a little later than anticipated. Following completion, I worked as a speciality dentist/doctor split between Manchester Dental School and a district general hospital for 12 months before relocating to Devon for my current position.

The national recruitment process is very competitive, and points are usually awarded for having undertaken poster/oral presentations at national and

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I work 8:45 am until 5 pm four days a week. On my day off I get to spend the day with my daughter at the beach or visiting Paignton Zoo. Throughout my training years, I was based in oral and maxillofacial surgery units which involved overnight and weekend shifts, so I relish my day off and normal working hours.

I provide Level 2 Oral Surgery and undertake consultation and treatment on referral clinics under local anaesthesia two days a week. I recently led the development of a new conscious sedation service to support

My aunty was an orthodontic consultant working in both primary and secondary care settings which meant when I was in secondary school, I had access to some amazing work experience placements. This fuelled my ambition to pursue dentistry as a career.

After graduating in 2011, I undertook my dental foundation training in Exeter and fell in love with the Southwest, making a promise to myself that I would settle here in the future. The team was wonderful, but I

« international conferences and having publications in peer-reviewed journals. There is an expectation that you have completed a few dental core training posts in oral surgery settings, but experience of other dental specialties is encouraged to reflect the multi-disciplinary nature of dentistry.

I love the immediate results of oral surgery and also like treating patients with

As the service works closely with Peninsula Dental School, the wider team I am part of includes lots of nursing staff and clinical supervisors who have different working patterns and are spread over four sites which does require a degree of flexibility. In terms of the oral surgery service, I work alongside a consultant oral surgeon and several dental nurses who have undertaken additional

of colleagues to support and advise you through your future career.

I usually get home around 6 pm. Outside work I love to cook and bake and have recently become interested in gardening as we renovate our new house. My grandmother was very green fingered and I'm hoping to follow in her footsteps.

We are very spoiled in Devon and at the weekend can head to the coast for a beach BBQ or go for a walk in Dartmoor National Park. Having a young child also means that weekends inevitably involve a visit to the park or soft play.

In the future I'd like to pursue an MSc in Healthcare Leadership and Management which I think would benefit taking on a more senior role in the organisation. But at the moment I'm enjoying the diversity and challenge of my new role and am prioritising time with my daughter whilst she actually wants to spend time with me! ■

**Interview by Kate Quinlan**

*If you would like to be interviewed for a 'day in the life of a dental specialist' please email [k.quinlan@nature.com](mailto:k.quinlan@nature.com).*

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## 'The great thing about oral surgery is the choice of different career paths and working environments [...]'

comorbidities which might preclude their treatment in general dental practice. These cases often involve liaising with other medical disciplines to ensure that the care you provide is appropriate and above all safe, which I find really rewarding.

Patients are understandably anxious of undergoing minor oral surgery, and it can be challenging balancing the management of that anxiety whilst ensuring that students are given ample opportunity to learn and develop their skills, but ultimately the patient's safety and experience takes priority.

training in minor oral surgery and conscious sedation.

The great thing about oral surgery is the choice of different career paths and working environments, be it working in primary care, secondary care, the community dental service or getting involved in education. The best advice I was given early in my career was that figuring out what you *want* to do is as important as finding out what you *don't want* to do. I would recommend trying different things, moving around, and working within different teams, which also creates a network

## Dental students win global aesthetic dentistry awards

Four case studies of clinically challenging restorations were chosen as winners in the Dentsply Sirona 2022–2023 Global Clinical Case Content, in an international competition for students of dentistry.

Two hundred and sixty students from 90 dental schools around the world took part in the competition, with 11 winners of regional competitions presenting their case studies to a jury in Germany consisting of Dr Ian Cline from King's College London, Prof Dr Gaetano Paolone of the University of Milan and Dr Frank Pfefferkorn, Senior Clinical Research Manager at Dentsply Sirona.

Margherita Feliciotti of the University of Siena, Italy won first prize; Catharina Glose of the University of Göttingen, Germany came second and in joint third place was Ahmed Kamal of the October University for Modern Sciences and Arts in Egypt and Yu-Fang Huang of



(left to right) Yu-Fang Huang, Catharina Glose and Margherita Feliciotti

the National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan.

The Dentsply Sirona Global Clinical Case Contest has been taking place since 2004/2005. It is aimed at dental students

with less than two years of clinical practice. The participants document their case using text and images and are supported by a tutor from their university.