

## BOS updates its guidance on supervision of orthodontic therapists

The British Orthodontic Society (BOS) has updated its guidance on the supervision of orthodontic therapists (OTs). More than 400 OTs have been trained and entered the orthodontic workforce in the last ten years and the number of OTs qualifying annually now exceeds the number of orthodontists completing postgraduate training.

The guidance is important to support the way that orthodontic teams operate in the workplace and also to underpin the training of both orthodontists and OTs. As the OT role has become more established, it is increasingly important for the guidance to help team members work both safely and in the most efficient way possible.

The key issue, said Simon Littlewood, a member of the working party responsible for updating the guidance and an orthodontic consultant, is that the OT must work to the prescription of an orthodontist. He said the prescription could be a verbal one or, if the orthodontist could not be present, there could be a detailed prescription in the patient's notes. The patient should never go for more than one appointment without seeing the orthodontist.

He said the role, which was introduced ten years ago, had been a valuable addition to the skill mix: 'The orthodontist can focus on the diagnosis and treatment planning, while closely overseeing the OT undertaking the practical aspects of the treatment, which OTs are so well trained to undertake. These new guidelines are all about sensible, safe and efficient use of the skill mix in orthodontics.'

The original guidance was written by a BOS team when the role achieved recognition from the GDC, and was first updated in 2012. This latest 2017 update is expected to be the touchstone for training of all orthodontic teams for a few years to come.

To view the guidance visit <http://www.bos.org.uk/Professionals-Members/Members-Area-Publications-General-Guidance/Information-and-Advice/General-Guidance/Supervision-of-Orthodontic-Therapists>.

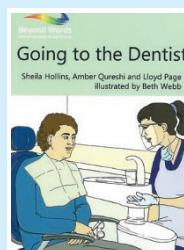
*The 30th British Orthodontic Conference will be held in Manchester on 14-16 September 2017. Highlights this year include 'The Great Digital Debate'; Nigel Harradine speaking on 40 years in orthodontics; and lingual orthodontist Professor Dirk Wiechmann as Northcroft lecturer. For more information see <http://www.bos.org.uk/BOC-Manchester-2017>.*

### BDA AGM

The North Western Branch of the British Dental Association (BDA) will hold their annual general meeting on Thursday 15 June 2017 in the MaxilloFacial Unit of Lancaster Royal Infirmary, commencing at 6:45 pm. Following the AGM there will be an informal meal at the nearby Greaves Park restaurant. To enable the Branch Secretary to submit accurate numbers in good time we would ask all members who wish to attend the meal to forward the response slip from the BDA Events page by Friday 2 June 2017.

Email copies of the AGM minutes and other papers will be sent to those members attending the meeting or those requesting them. Further details and or to request copies of papers please contact Mark Collinson at [mscollinson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mscollinson@hotmail.co.uk).

### BOOK REVIEW



#### GOING TO THE DENTIST

Sheila Hollins, Amber Qureshi, Lloyd Page (authors) and Beth Webb (Illustrator)

Beyond Words, 2016

price £10 pp 104

ISBN: 9781784580841

*Going to the dentist* is the latest book to be published in the 'Books Beyond Words' series – a collection of picture books aimed at people who find pictures easier to understand than words. The book is intended as a tool to be used by both dental health professionals and patient supporters/carers to aid in preparing someone for a visit to the dentist or supporting a patient during an appointment.

The story is told through 39 full page colour illustrations. This starts with the main character Matthew, eating sugary foods and then developing toothache. It then goes on to show him attending the dentist and includes a series of illustrations demonstrating him undergoing a variety of procedures including examination, having radiographs taken, intra-oral injections and restoration of his tooth. The end of the story shows pictures of Matthew undertaking good oral hygiene practices and selecting healthy foods.

In addition to the pictorial story, the book contains a very useful section of written information directed at the person supporting the patient in reading the book. This includes a suggested storyline with a description of what is happening in each picture, clear instructions on how to read the book, succinct easy to understand advice on 'looking after teeth and gums' and a list of suggested useful resources. A particularly good part of this section is the information provided specifically to dental health professionals. This gives helpful brief advice regarding communication, mental capacity assessment and reasonable adjustments that can be made for this patient group. There is also a similar section aimed at supporters and carers, which advises on communication and information they may need to provide at the dental appointment, as well as general tips for making a visit to the dentist as stress-free as possible for the person they are supporting.

This book provides a very good resource for those working with adults who struggle to understand written words and for whom a visit to the dentist would provoke uncertainty and anxiety. One of the greatest strengths of the book is that the illustrations are true to life and accurately depict the things that you would expect to see in the dental environment such as x-ray holders and local anaesthetic syringes, and the smaller details such as the dentist's face visor and the patient wearing safety glasses. While this book may not necessarily be useful for all patients with a learning disability, it is certainly something that would be useful to have in your armamentarium of communication tools.

K. Finn