

One of the earlier papers on this subject was in 2003 by Robertson and others,<sup>1</sup> 'An increase in face height and reductions in overbite and overjet were evident at 6 months'. Similar findings are constantly found in the many references below with no contrary findings.<sup>2-5</sup> The problem seems to be related to vertical facial growth which is a common sequel to orthodontic treatment of almost any kind.

The only system that claims to reduce vertical growth is orthotropics (Fig. 1) which was developed by myself but evidence is hard to obtain since I had my license to practice removed for promoting it.

*J. R. C. Mew, by email*

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## Children's oral health

### 70 years on

Sir, for British Society of Paediatric Dentistry's (BSPD's) members, the NHS' 70th birthday is a time of mixed emotions. On the one hand, children's oral health has improved dramatically over the years, but on the other, children in lower socioeconomic groups are still more likely to report that poor oral health impacts on their daily lives.

Successive governments have failed to reduce inequalities in children's oral health. The statistics from NHS Digital tell a story of rampant inequality, mostly, but not exclusively, in the North. Education and inspiration are essential to motivate our young patients to look after their oral hygiene. How do we access the most deprived and hard to reach? This is the question also facing the

hugely successful Childsmile (Scotland) and Designed to Smile (Wales) programmes, and hopefully being addressed in part by the Starting Well scheme in England. We need to look at reaching our patients and their parents/carers in other ways. When only 40% of children were seen by an NHS dentist last year we have to identify other effective methods of engagement. As more young people own mobile phones, there are opportunities for us to reach out on social media and via apps. The means of communication is there, all it needs is creativity and a will to engage in a language or style that the young will respond to.

And we must all work together – sharing ideas and information. BSPD has produced resources to support Dental Check by One and is ready to engage with everyone working with or producing information for young families. Our gift to the NHS? Our commitment to continue to work to improve children's oral health and build collaborations too. Children's oral health is everyone's business.

*C. Stevens, BSPD President*

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