



LAB OWNER CELEBRATES DOUBLE MILESTONE

Peter Walter Smith, who featured in *Vital* in 2012 in *From spare room to superman* (summer issue), is celebrating two milestones this year: his 80th birthday and 65 years in the dental profession. Peter is the owner of Acodent Dental Laboratory in Little Lever, Bolton, the UK's largest independent dental laboratory, which employs over 90 people.

Turning 80 on 31 May 2013, Peter said: 'Over the years my biggest contribution to dentistry is probably the hundreds of people I have trained to do the job properly. I gain satisfaction from seeing these people develop – some moving on to start their own laboratories – and keeping the client happy, the company profitable, keeping an eye on the staff's interest in the company and trying to be sure we are running a "happy ship".'

According to his colleagues, Peter still has the commitment and energy of a 21-year-old. His aims for the future are to see the laboratory continue to produce the best possible dental appliances and services for dentists and patients; to open first class dental surgeries on-site for dentists to bring their patients; and with their state-of-the-art equipment, to maintain the lab's high standing in the dental community.



GDC REMOVES BARRIER TO DIRECT ACCESS

On 28 March the UK dental care professional (DCP) community were thrilled to hear the announcement that the **General Dental Council** (GDC) is removing its barrier to Direct Access for some DCPs.

Responding to the news, the British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) tweeted that it was 'fabulous news' and a 'great day for BSDHT and the profession'. Carl Fenwick of the **Clinical Dental Technicians Alumni** (cdtalumi.com; pictured above) said that it was 'a huge step forward for our patients and profession, increasing patient choice and greatly improving accessibility to safe professional dental treatment'.

Starting on 1 May 2013, dental hygienists and dental therapists can now – if they choose to – carry out their full scope of practice without prescription and without the patient having to see a dentist first. Dental hygienists and dental therapists must be confident that they have the skills and competences required to treat patients before doing so and a period of practice working to a dentist's prescription is recommended by the GDC.

Dental hygienists and therapists who qualified since 2002 covered the full scope of practice in their training. Those who qualified before 2002, or those who have not applied their skills recently, must review their training and experience to ensure they are competent to undertake all the duties within their scope of practice.

Also as of 1 May 2013, dental nurses are now able to participate in preventive programmes without the patient having to see a dentist first and orthodontic therapists can carry out Index of Orthodontic

Treatment Need (IOTN) screening without the patient having to see a dentist first. Clinical dental technicians (CDTs) should continue to see patients directly for the provision and maintenance of full dentures only, and should otherwise carry out their other work on the prescription of a dentist.

The President of the **British Association of Dental Nurses** (BADN), Nicola Doherty, said that the BADN is particularly pleased that dental nurses will now be able to make full use of their oral health qualifications, but emphasised the importance of dental nurses ensuring that they are fully trained, competent, and above all indemnified for any tasks they undertake.

After the GDC's announcement the **British Dental Association** released a statement saying that the decision 'undermines best practice in patient care'.

Dr Judith Husband, Chair of the BDA's Education, Ethics and the Dental Team Committee, said: 'This is a misguided decision that fails to consider best practice in essential continuity of care, patient choice and cost-effectiveness, and weakens teamworking in dentistry which is demonstrated to be in patients' best interests. Dental hygienists and therapists [...] do not undertake the full training that dentists do and on their own are not able to provide the holistic, comprehensive care that patients need and expect. Our fear is that this could lead to health problems being missed in patients who choose to access hygiene and therapy appointments directly.'

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