

## Delivery of care

I must say that I was delighted to read the letter *They are called dentists* from Peter Small in the summer 2008 issue of *Vital*, highlighting parameters for an Oral Health Review, aka a 'dental examination'.

These comprehensive procedures are almost exactly similar to those carried out in my private practice over many years, prior to formulating treatment (or not) recommendations for a patient, especially on a first visit. Firstly I would sit with the patient in a pre-treatment room environment and explain amongst other things that after an hour or so we would have an idea of what their status was and would make outline recommendations which may also mean further investigations and additional visit/s to define exactly their specific needs to treat for the long term.

There is no doubt that I would be uncomfortable with anything less, but an hour in private practice is charged to the patient and is viable. What pray happens in the NHS? Bankruptcy looms if anyone spent an hour plus on an initial patient assessment visit does it not? Does this beg the question as to whether what is delivered to patients under the umbrella of

the NHS is compromise and expediency? Why is the profession not more vocal on this?

Further, in the context of DCP training mentioned, the GDC profile for a clinical dental technicians training programme is not far short in content in some areas of that for dentists, with supposed ability to use radiography, recognise soft tissue pathology, degrees of periodontal breakdown and whole patient status etc which may be a little worrying if this is not structured appropriately.

Conversely, there is so much that can and should be done by therapists (orthodontic, restorative, prosthodontic and periodontal) that can transform the delivery of care to patients. The role of the dentist vis-à-vis the therapist needs some overdue management and application in this context.

*Dr Keith Marshall, by email*



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win Beverly Hills goodies worth £100.

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expressed do not necessarily reflect those  
of the editorial team or publishers.*

## HOTSPOT



**Name:** Wendy Leach

**Age:** 43

**Town:** Tonbridge

**Loves:** All things technological,  
animals and sunshine.

**Hates:** Polystyrene! Intolerance of all  
kinds, and beetroot.

**What is your job?** Clinical IT Co-ordinator, which involves (as well as nursing and reception) making presentations for lectures, filming and editing implant surgery, designing marketing leaflets and newsletters for the practice and statistical analysis of data. I am also Assistant Radiation Supervisor.

**How did you get your job?** I started at Stradbroke Dental Centre almost ten years ago as a part time receptionist, whilst my children were small, but luckily I was encouraged to use my love of IT, which has made my job much more varied, and more recently I am able to design marketing leaflets and other creative projects.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?** I absolutely love my job – we are a great team and the practice is very forward looking, but the best part is being able to

use my creative  
side and my love  
of IT.

**What is the most challenging part of your job?** Some days I feel I am doing 100 things all at once and there are just not enough hours in the day – good job I like working under pressure!

**If you weren't working in dentistry, what would you be doing?** If money were no object I would work with autistic young people – my son has Asperger's syndrome – and being with him and his friends makes you appreciate how valuable they are and how much they have to give if they have the right input.

**Would you recommend a career in dentistry?** I would – especially with the way dentistry is moving forward, there are many more roles evolving other than the traditional nurse or receptionist, such as treatment co-ordinator or nurse specialist.

**What three things could you not live without?** Apart from the obvious (my husband and children!) – my dogs, my Macbook and my car (12 years young!)