

Focus Awards 2001



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In the third of a series of five articles in which we look at each of the practice finalists from the Focus Awards 2001, we visit MP Dental Practice in Bermondsey, London.

A PDS practice, the MP Dental Practice in Bermondsey stood out for its employment of interactive patient education. It also had the attraction of a healthy living juice bar and internet cafe, helping take the chore out of patient-waiting.

Its good to talk

MP Dental Practice place a high emphasis on staff-communication and lay aside time for weekly staff discussion forums. This encourages staff to discuss and address general staff and patient concerns. Meetings also offer the opportunity to discuss and agree 'best practice' protocols and practice policies. Such protocols can include calling a patient into the surgery and dealing with aggressive and dissatisfied patients. The dentists also hold regular clinical meetings to discuss cases, plan treatment of difficult cases and discuss learning opportunities and peer review.



Fig. 3. Interactive patient care (top) and digitally-produced radiographs for patients to take home with them.



Fig. 1. The team from MP Dental Practice in Bermondsey, London

One member of staff, a receptionist, has trained as an oral health educator. This person focuses on preventative advice; identifying reasons behind dental disease and educating patients and relatives where appropriate. For instance, children who have experienced dental disease are referred to the oral health educator for a clinical session which aims to identify the reasons behind the disease. After this, the process will be concentrated on educating the child and patients on diet control, brushing technique and prevention.

Enhancing the patient experience

MP Dental Practice enjoys shared premises with Age Concern Southwark and both parties cross-refer patients. Patients can wander across from the dentists' waiting room to acquire refreshments from the shared healthy living juice bar or even use the Internet. And their modern approach to patient care does not stop there.

Patients can enjoy interactive patient education at the chairside. Each surgery has ceiling mounted LCD monitors by which patients can view (from a supine position) real-time images of their oral cavity via intra-oral cameras. Intra-oral and extra-oral digital radiographs can also

be viewed. A patient education software system animates dental procedures further empowering the patient via education and informed consent. Patients can take home their very own 'treatment portfolios' with them - these can include charts, digital radiographs, clinical photographs, a full written treatment plan and patient information sheets for treatment to be undertaken.

Keen to make their practice accessible to all, MP Dental Practice are currently devising a website to encourage patient interaction. Staff also regularly visit a variety of drop-in centres and other local centres in the area to do free oral cancer screening.



Fig. 2. A healthy living juice bar makes patient-waiting a much more pleasant experience

The Focus Awards are a joint initiative sponsored by the Department of Health and the BDA which recognise and reward patient-focused innovations that have taken place in the last two years. Any single or group of providers of NHS dental care within GDS, CDS or PDS can be nominated. The deadline for applications is 30 June 2002. To apply for this year's Focus Awards or request further information please call the BDA on 020 7563 4563.