

A DENTIST'S LIFE



'This is the first disruptive oral health product to come out for a long time'

Interview by Kate Quinlan

Dev Patel, 28, is Principal Dentist and Clinical Director of Dental Beauty Swanley. He is the co-founder and CEO of Dental Circle, a dental networking platform, and co-founder and CEO of Brushlink, a brushing device that is launched this month.

I usually get up at 7 am and have a Berocca and a litre of water. I live in Stone, Dartford with my wife. I drive to work which is ten minutes away.

On a typical week I am in the practice two days, working clinically and managing; I put one day aside on average to manage Dental Circle; and four days a week at the moment I spend managing and preparing to launch Brushlink. This can all overlap and a typical working day will last 15 hours.

There are 18 people in my dental team at Dental Beauty Swanley. I personally offer almost all dental treatments ranging from orthodontics to implants, cosmetic dentistry, general dentistry and CEREC.

I originally became interested in dentistry as a career after I had braces as a teenager. In addition it was the only healthcare profession that allowed me to help improve a patient's health and run a business at the same time. I have always wanted to run my own business. My older brother is a dentist too.

As a general dentist I get to see a wide range of patients from all walks of life. One of the biggest issues dental professionals face is getting our patients to brush properly and regularly. After doing some market research I learned that the majority of people in the UK still use a manual toothbrush and the majority of our patients don't brush for two minutes twice a day. I was also shocked to see that the actual evidence for brushing twice a day for two minutes was insufficient. This kind of made sense to me: how could anyone carry out an accurate study on brushing habits, duration and

technique without either being in the patient's bathroom or having a device that tracked brushing behaviour? This then triggered the 'penny drop' moment – why don't we make a device that can track brushing habits?

As this all happened in 2015, I researched other products that already created 'smart toothbrushes', but none of them seemed to fit the bill. We would never be able to force everyone to use the same brush, so I decided to create a device that can attach on to any toothbrush. The price point had to be affordable for the mass market, as the people who can afford an expensive toothbrush most likely

smartphone application. The device attaches to all toothbrush types and seamlessly links to the smartphone application via Bluetooth technology. This system provides patients with real-time feedback on their brushing angulation and empowers them to improve their oral hygiene habits. The patients are rewarded with a brushing score after each session, based on the duration and angulation quality of their brushing. These Brushlink points will accumulate over time and can be redeemed on the Brushlink Rewards plan, allowing patients to receive discounts for private treatments/sundries.

It has been over two years since we started to develop and create Brushlink and I'm very excited about the official launch. This is the first disruptive oral health product to come out for a long time and we feel it will be a game changer.

After a busy day I usually get home at 6 pm but then I go into London for meetings most

'How could anyone carry out an accurate study on brushing habits, duration and technique without either being in the patient's bathroom or having a device that tracked brushing behaviour?'

don't need brushing coaching. We wanted to offer the technology that was already being used in expensive 'smart toothbrushes' and medical fitness tracking devices to everyone. So then Brushlink was created!

I worked with a range of professionals to create the device, from general dentists to perio specialists and GPs, to create a clinically led algorithm to ensure the Brushlink scoring system was not just random but could actually provide a clinical evidence-led score.

The Brushlink System consists of a small attachable device and an associated

days. When I have free time I like to spend it with family and friends and also enjoy golf, the gym and travelling.

At the weekend I would *like* to relax but this is quite rare as I work on Saturdays at the practice and end up catching up on work.

In the future my plans are to keep developing Brushlink and hopefully more innovations to help improve oral health across the globe and improve patient outcomes in any healthcare industry.

I usually go to bed between midnight and 1 am. ■