

# Protecting our future

Newly-elected **Robin Mills** shares his vision for term in office with the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) in this month's President's Column.



**2**015 has been a particularly busy year for the Society which has been involved with an international event, our annual scientific meeting, contributing to a Commissioning Guide for Specialist Paediatric Dentistry and also to a Commons Health Select Committee Enquiry into children's oral health. We have also had involvement in radio and TV programmes and national newspaper articles highlighting children's oral health.

In July, we hosted the International Association of Paediatric Dentistry Congress in Glasgow with the theme of 'The Voice of the Child'. This was a very successful event and we had inspiring speakers from all parts of the world.

Our annual scientific meeting and AGM is held once a year in September and is organised by the local branch of the incoming President. This is a wonderful tradition and gives a regional and different flavour to the meeting every year. We have had social functions in such diverse venues as Cambridge Colleges and Stormont Castle. Our meeting in September this year was hosted by the South West Branch in Bath. The theme of the main meeting was 'How safe is your child?' The distressing subjects of FGM and modern slavery were highlighted and gave delegates an insight into relatively new safeguarding issues that all members of the dental team should be aware of. It was pleasing to see that the GDC has also just issued guidance on FGM. I have served on 2 local safeguarding children boards simultaneously for several years. This is an excellent way of forging links with other agencies and we would like to see a dental surgeon on local safeguarding children boards made mandatory. Another tradition in our society is that the President during their year of office embarks on a 'lecture tour' to some of the regional branches.

We are working with NHS England at present to help produce a commissioning document for Specialist Paediatric Dentistry. The Chair of our Commissioning Working

Group is Dr Stephen Fayle who is a Consultant in Paediatric Dentistry at the Leeds Dental Institute and a member of the Board of the Faculty of Dental Surgery. This working group has already met with NHS England in London, with focus group meetings with parents and children planned for early next year.

In July, as Vice President, I gave a presentation at the Westminster Forum. I highlighted the lack of 'joined up thinking'

the question 'why put other clinicians on a form that requires a GP entry' you will now realise that the answer is 'why not?'

Next year, we will be also holding a 'Stakeholder Day' as part of our drive to raise awareness of contemporary challenges in paediatric dentistry and the work of the membership.

**'I WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME CHANGES THAT I BELIEVE WOULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TO THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN'**

for children within the NHS and elsewhere, citing the omission of dental surgeons from databases such as the NHS Spine and the SIMS database in schools that contain a child's GP but not the dentist.

I would like to see some changes that I believe would make a significant difference to the health of children. For example, when applying for a nursery or school place, the child's dental surgeon and optician should be on the application form in addition to the doctor. Small details such as these are, in fact, big details. Our own medical history forms should also include a space for opticians as well as the GP. Does a GP ask whether our children visit a dental surgeon or an optician on their forms? In any new relationship, whether it is between people, schools or clubs, we want to make a good impression and will not want to miss out questions. If we ask on a form for clinicians who all children should see on a regular basis, we have raised an issue that is important and carers with parental responsibility will see this. As professionals, we know that not only is it important, but it is essential for 'preventing impairment of children's health or development' (Working Together to Safeguard Children - March 2015). If we ask on forms only for the GP then the perception is that only having a GP is important for a child to be healthy. By asking

In my completely unbiased opinion, I consider the BSPD to be one of the friendliest and committed societies that a dental professional could be a member of and it is a huge privilege to be their President. We welcome members of the dental team and at £15, £40 or £60 per annum depending on your role (less with tax relief!), this gives you 6 issues of the International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry every year, the opportunity to discuss and ask questions with colleagues and up to date information via email on current issues. As a member of your local branch, you can become a council member and be involved in deciding how the society should evolve in the future – you may even be writing this column! We are always happy to give a warm welcome to new members and details of how to join are on our website -www.bspd.co.uk.

**Dr Robin Mills BDS MSc DDS**

Specialty Doctor in Paediatric Dentistry - Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Honorary Research Fellow - University of Bristol

President BSPD - 2015-2016

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