Helping to give the best start in life to children

Oluseyi Latinwo RDN, MPH wrote this account of her career journey especially for *BDJ Team*. She is married to Adewale Latinwo (a Citrix Consultant) and together they have three children: Iretomiwa, 21, studying Economics at the University of Portsmouth; Naomi, 12 and Deborah, nine. Oluseyi enjoys spending time with her family and gardening in her leisure time.

About 21 years ago as I was going to work, I encountered a man whose tongue was protruding out of his mouth. He was begging for money on the streets of Lagos, Nigeria. I felt really sorry for him and I was really bothered.

On getting home that day, I told my dad about what I had seen earlier that day and my dad said to me 'he must have cancer of the mouth'. Throughout the week I couldn't stop thinking about the man and the gory sight. A few weeks after the day I had seen him, I gathered that the man had died.

I made up my mind that I would look more into what 'mouth cancer' means and how I could help prevent such diseases in the future.

In 2013, I was privileged to be admitted into the Eastman Dental Hospital as a student dental nurse. It was a whole year of studying, learning and being involved in turning patients' lives around by supporting and assisting dentists, consultants and professors from different countries in looking after diverse kinds of patients.

In 2015, I got my Diploma in Dental Nursing; I was employed by the Eastman Dental Hospital. This was a dream come true. I started working at the Special Care department where I supported in the treatment of special needs patients including children; I was also privileged to assist during biopsies and the facial pain clinic. I enjoyed

the satisfied look on our patients' faces after treatment and the look of recognition on their face when they next came for an appointment.

Running a clinic can be very challenging but I enjoyed the setting up of the surgery and preparation for the day. This starts off by ensuring the surgery is all wiped and set up for the clinic, ensuring all patients' notes

After a year as a Special Care dental nurse at the Eastman Dental Hospital, I decided to further my education. I completed a Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Hertfordshire in 2016. This gave me the opportunity to work as an Oral Health Practitioner (OHP) with the charity organisation HENRY (Health, Exercise,

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are ready and setting the Electronic Patient Record with the right date, clinic and dentist, and having all kits ready for the different treatments of the day.

I enjoyed being able to give an assuring smile to my patients as I have realised over time that the patients would rather talk to me as a nurse even after the dentist has given them details of the treatment. I am constantly helping my patients get over their anxiety of being in the dental chair by chatting with them, encouraging them and assuring them that they are in good hands.

and Nutrition for the Really Young) in conjunction with the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

I currently work three days a week as an OHP with HENRY and I locum with Tempdent two days a week. In my role as OHP, I am responsible for training and developing oral health champions in the Children and Family centres in the four hubs in Waltham Forest. I am also responsible for coordinating dental outreach sessions for vulnerable children in all the children's centres. As tooth decay is one of the most

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common diseases of childhood in the United Kingdom, I am really excited in my role as I help children and their families understand that this disease is highly preventable through regular brushing, adequate exposure to fluoride, reduction in the frequency at which sugar is being consumed, and registering and visiting the dentist as soon as a child's first tooth appears. I work with a community dentist as I organise and coordinate dental sessions where children of 0-5 years are being given a free dental check. In the months of August and September 2017, over 110 children benefitted from our free dental check.

I also deliver oral health workshops in my local assembly where we organise outreach for the less privileged in Hackney. I demonstrate tooth brushing technique, using demonstration models, distributing samples of the toothpaste, signposting patients to their

local dentist and giving them information leaflets which will help them in their journey to good oral health.

I enjoy oral health promotion and to further enhance my performance and effectiveness, I have enrolled myself on the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS). Currently, I am on the Advanced Dental Nurse Course (delivered by Health Education England). This course is giving me more knowledge and great confidence in my present role.

I regularly reflect on my activities and look back to where this journey started; I am really happy I am contributing to the prevention of oral diseases, especially as part of a team [HENRY], helping to give the best start in life to children.

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