

What practising dentists really want to know



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I've often viewed *Twitter* as an echo chamber of your own thoughts, conscience and beliefs. If that doesn't apply to you, you're a better person than me.

The tendency to seek out views that reinforce our own limits growth, wider understanding of any given topic and development. In a professional capacity, it's almost impossible to achieve anything if that's your *modus operandi*. If you're dead set against the pace of contract reform, do you seek out sources that might tell you what progress *has* taken place? If you're a specialist, do you have a look over the fence to see how the cogs of high street, hospital and community dentistry are affecting you and your patients? If you're a practice owner, do you read around the big issues and hot topics your hygienist, therapist and/or nurses are talking about?

In my time as editor, I have written about many things that portions of the workforce

have simply not agreed with. That's absolutely fine – I have no problem with that. It shows that the article has had an impact on the reader, particularly when they have then been compelled to write a letter to me. It's how we learn, and although COVID-19 has dominated the not-so recent flow of content, I can still recall one avid reader suggesting via email that I go and engage in sexual intercourse with myself for daring to question the health benefits of apple cider vinegar. That individual did not make it onto the Christmas card list.

And so to the introduction of *BDJ In Practice's* big impact collection. From the continuing ramifications of COVID-19 to declining antibiotic prescribing, this collection reflects the issues that really matter to practising dentists and are some of the most accessed and shared articles from the last two years. While some of the articles in this collection are (hopefully?) time-limited (COVID-19, we're looking at you), others will have an impact long after their initial publishing. Natalie Bradley's excellent look at the disconcerting link between dentistry and suicide will resonate with campaigners calling for more – and better – access to mental

health resources. Natalie Birchall's breakdown of tackling racism in the workplace, written at the height of the controversy over George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis, will shape the workplace policies of those practices looking to improve their knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. My discussion with women in specialty training, digging into whether being a women fundamentally affects their burgeoning careers, had a positive impact on those facing some of the hurdles mentioned in the article. Susie Sanderson's and Wendy Thompson's assessment of whether antibiotic prescribing can recover the downward trajectory seen in the first national lockdown will have an impact as the Omicron wave hits the UK. And yes, you can also read about apple cider vinegar. I could go on.

As we move into 2022 with a sense of *déjà vu*, it goes without saying that I hope we see change for the better. In the meantime, we will continue to drive that change through conversation, learning and making an impact.

To view the Big Impact Collection, visit www.nature.com/collections/bigimpact ♦

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