

EDITORIAL



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Well, things are slightly different since my last editorial!

It goes without saying all of our attention has been on COVID-19 since March. The world is a very different place, and within it dentistry is unrecognisable. Dentists look like they're preparing for moon walks, treatment is limited to non-aerosol generated procedures (AGPs) and for dental students, the world you're entering or returning to will be vastly different.

With universities closed, I know fully well what readers have been up to: writing. Since the end of March, some 150 articles have been submitted to *BDJ Student*. Needless to say we've all been blown away by the creativity, the quality and the horizon-scanning of the contributions we've received.

The eagle-eyed readers will notice the issue doesn't have a whole host of articles relating to the pandemic. We received some very strong submissions early on in lockdown, and were there an issue of *BDJ Student* published then, there would have been many articles that would have been useful to dental students.

Fast forward four months and those high-quality articles have hopefully found new homes across the *BDJ* portfolio and other more suitable outlets.

The pandemic and nature of the virus has and is moving so quickly it's almost impossible to publish articles that remain current and of value to readers at the time of writing, acceptance, production and publishing.

So that's the problem, but what's the solution? Well, from 1 September, we're delighted to offer authors the opportunity to publish their articles online only. This will still undergo the very same process as an article published in the magazine, with the notable exception of appearing in print. Not only does this give authors the valuable commodity of being current, it gives us the opportunity to develop things you have been asking us for – clinical 'how to' guides as well as detailed careers advice.

As we move through and (hopefully) out of the pandemic, I wish that you all continue to be safe and healthy. Enjoy the issue.

David Westgarth ■

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Hello everyone,

What a strange few months it has been! It was foolish of me not to invest in buying shares in Zoom at the start of lockdown. As normality haltingly begins to resume, we can reflect on what a vast impact that this viral pandemic has had on countries all around the globe.

Dentistry has always maintained a sterile environment, but post-COVID-19 practice has nonetheless evolved into a tightly regimented new way of treating patients. The recent sphere of AGPs is a microcosm of other faculties, even outside the healthcare sector; substantial modifications have been made in the way jobs are now coordinated.

As a student, the chunk of missed clinic time is quite worrying.

My friends and I frequently fret about our manual skills deteriorating in the privation of time spent with our patients. Having learnt a significant proportion of theory in the first few years of dental school, the summer term was supposed to equip us with further application of this theory in practice. It is quite frustrating for us (and undoubtedly the tutors also), to have been quarantined whilst in the middle of several courses learning new skills in the labs. Despite thorough online teaching, there are certain subjects that you simply cannot learn through a screen.

Understandably, the laboratories are primarily being utilised in the reskilling of current fourth years, who will soon be final year students. However, the prospect of returning to clinics and carrying out endodontic treatment or trying your first suture post-exodontia, having had this much time away, is simultaneously daunting yet incredibly exciting. Having been given a snippet of clinical dentistry and then had months taken away it has delineated how much we miss our clinics, seeing friends and our busy schedules.

The value of constant communication has been further elucidated in this time period, in aid of retaining sanity, especially when in lockdown with multiple family members in a busy household. Hopefully, those of you that have spent isolation unaccompanied have found peace in your own presence and had regular chats with those dearest to you. I envisage that living through this significant episode in history, will allow us to find gratitude in the simple mundane acts, such as buying a hot drink in your favourite coffee shop and modest pleasures like hugging friends. In anticipation of the closure of this disruptive chapter of our lives, I wish that you all remain safe and healthy.

Sophia Antoniou ■

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WHAT
YOU
NEED
TO
KNOW?

