



## THE HYPERSENSITIVE SNOWMAN

Dental hygienist and therapist **Laura Marshall** has written the following lighthearted story to act as a reminder on the precedence of establishing hypersensitive causation prior to treatment.

**I**t was a cold winter's night. All was silent except for a distant chattering of teeth coming from the garden. 'Ow ... ah' the snowman moaned. He had been complaining ever since the snow had fallen, for his teeth had not stopped aching. Hypersensitivity had been diagnosed and he had tried everything! He had been advised sensitive toothpastes, fluoride products, sealants. At this point he was so fed up he was considering a complete new smile reconstruction.

He slumped in the snow and pondered, 'Why has this happened?'

Over brushing had been vaguely mentioned in the past. He had heard the lady of the house shriek at the children, who often rushed the morning tooth brushing to play out in the garden: 'you'll scrub away your enamel!' The snowman considered this. Well, he did have limited manual dexterity what with his twig fashioned arms... perhaps he was being over vigorous.

On the other branch what if it was under brushing? He looked over to the house and observed the father of the family through the dining room window, picking in between his teeth after the Christmas meal as if indicating the importance of

interdental cleaning. 'It could be gum disease related,' he thought.

The snowman had considered his oral hygiene to be fair but he was partial to the occasional puff of his pipe. 'That could contribute to periodontal recession, surely,' he reflected.

Come to think of it there were many possible causations for his sensitivity. The snowman looked at the mound of carrots left in the garden for the children's rabbits. Perhaps it could be diet-induced through acid erosion. Or the new charcoal toothpaste he had been trying to whiten his smile with. He began to grind his teeth as he contemplated this. Bruxism! As he deliberated he set about using the handle of his broom to write a long list in the snow of the possible causations. The list slowly lengthened to fill the breadth of the garden.

By the end of the night the snowman had decided his sensitivity was multifactorial. And by the end of the week, through careful thought behind eliminating each cause, the chattering had stopped and his sensitivity had subsided. 'Thank goodness I hadn't begun restorative treatment. Prevention before restoration is key,' he mused, as a new dawn came and the warmth of the day washed over him.

## A GREAT BUZZ IN THE ROOM FOR DENTAL NURSE EVENT

The Society of British Dental Nurses (SBDN) were very proud to host the Prof Ireland Annual Lecture in September and were delighted at the number of individuals that attended. There was representation from dental therapists, hygienists, clinical dental technologists, orthodontic dental nurses and therapists, dental nurses, oral health promoters, student and newly qualified dental nurses, general dental practitioners and members of the specialist fields.

The event was held at the Birmingham Dental Hospital. Professor Ireland gave a plenary talk then introduced Anna Ireland, a Consultant for Public Health England. Anna gave an excellent presentation around oral health messages and links to general health and wellbeing. Finally, Professor Tim Newton, a psychologist as applied to dentistry at King's College London, provided another interesting talk with a touch of magic.

According to delegates, there was a great buzz in the room and lunch was amazing too. The next annual lecture will be held on 19 September 2020. Professor Ireland has over many years worked hard to bring about skill-mix and role substitution for all dental care professional groups and is responsible for a number of core texts as well.

For further information visit the SBDN website: [www.sbdn.org.uk](http://www.sbdn.org.uk).

*SBDN Patron Fiona Ellwood received her British Empire Medal (BEM) on 20 September 2019 at a prestigious event. The medal was given to Fiona for her contribution to dentistry. SBDN commented: 'Fiona works relentlessly for the good of the profession. She has been and continues to be an inspiration to many; we acknowledge how fortunate we are to be able to work so closely with her, although if she was asked we know she would be telling us how fortunate she is.'*