

Ed's letter

Five years ago I was lucky enough to meet Mili Doshi and the team behind the Mouth Care Matters programme at East Surrey Hospital (<https://go.nature.com/3CJZo9I>). East Surrey was the first hospital in the country to have a specialist mouth care team of dental care professionals (DCPs) to improve the oral health of hospital inpatients. We have since met a number of mouth care dental nurses in *BDJ Team* as well.



Fast forward to 2022, and we learn from Caroline Holland this month that Mouth Care Matters is no longer being funded by Health Education England. According to Caroline, 'there is still an uphill battle to embed adequate oral care among care home residents and hospital patients'. However, other initiatives have been launched, such as Scotland's Caring for Smiles and Wales' Gwên am Byth (A Lasting Smile). Caroline also looks at a recent programme in Australia, where dental hygienists and 'oral therapists' are employed to treat care home residents. As in the UK, funding is a challenge to the expansion of this programme.

Caroline's in-depth look at the challenges of oral care of the older person will continue in the April issue.

On a similar theme – the oral care of an ageing population – we have a new piece on oral health and dementia by Laura Hinds; and associate dentist Alex Farrow-Hamblen provides a knowledge update for dental therapists on the subject of dentures. As Alex writes: 'the reader should appreciate how their approach to soft tissues examination, caries management, non-surgical periodontal therapy and prevention, note-keeping and/or clinical photography can be modified and used in the denture-wearing patient, all the while working within their scope of practice, skills set confidence and competencies'. This is also our CPD article.

Beaming from our front cover this month is Molly McCabe. Molly takes us through a typical week working as a dental nurse on oral surgery and orthodontic wards in Wigan. We would like to wish Molly all the best when she begins training as an orthodontic therapist later this year.

If you want to see what a surgical procedure Molly might be assisting with looks like, visit our oral surgery photo gallery, provided by Zahra Yasen. It's not ideal viewing for the squeamish – but surely DCPs have strong stomachs?!

Kate

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<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41407-022-0868-0>

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©Molly McCabe

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Publisher: Rebecca Shreeve

British Dental Journal

The Campus
4 Crinan Street
London N1 9XW

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