A DENTIST'S LIFE

'Discipline is the most important thing to me'

Polymath **Amritraj Jabbal**, 38, is a Specialist Orthodontist at Smilepod across six sites in London. Originally from Nairobi, Kenya, 'Raj' works three weeks in London and one week in Nairobi.

I come from a family where half were hardworking and the other half were layabouts. So it came about early in my career that I needed to make a decision and I took the former.

After my schooling in Kenya I studied in India for my BDS. It was an interesting period of my life where I learnt how competition knows no bounds in a country that graduates 10,000 dentists a year. After that I worked in Kenya for a few years at the hospital where I worked with the Max Fax department and understood how that specific field was not my cup of tea.

Speaking of tea, I then passed the IQE and moved to the UK. I did my Master's at King's College and hung around. Orthodontics is my life; I love it almost to a point of addiction. I cannot get enough of it and hence why I run around the world going to courses from Taiwan to USA, from Slovenia to Sweden. Learning different techniques, done by different specialists, with different desires, it does become enlightening.

As soon as I completed my Master's, I started work in private orthodontics where I began understanding a little more about lingual braces, temporary anchorage and aligners. I commenced working more and more at a clinic in Bank (in the City of London) called Smilepod (www.smilepod.co.uk) with a wonderful team.

I wake up early, usually about 4 am, and I study genetics, my newfound lore. I have a Certificate from Stanford in Genetics and Genomics and it needs to be watered with knowledge daily! As an orthodontist I have been always excited to understand more and more about growth and development.

By around 6 am I am already in Central London getting my treatment plans sorted out, writing letters and responding to emails. As

the day goes on I work at two other practices in London where I see mainly adult orthodontics. It is an interesting and challenging field, which never ceases to stimulate in both good and bad. My team is amazing, from the dental nurses who I enjoy breaking Game of Thrones spoilers with, to the reception team whom I prank regularly. In the end, however, the patients are number one and they love coming back for some great service.

City life is tough, there are so many things to do and so many distractions, I have loved the accessibility and the nuances; however, I have also been deviated from my goals. Being

month where we discuss orthodontic cases with dentists throughout the capital.

Back in the UK I have an auxiliary company called Cephtactics Biotech that aims to train GDPs in basic orthodontics to enhance their short term orthodontic courses as well as research into genetics and cybernetics both in the orthodontic field. After coming back from an amazing BDA exhibition [the British Dental Conference and Dentistry Show in May], we have already launched our latest Orthodontic Clinical Assistance Directive that gives second opinions and advice to clinicians

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grounded is so important, and discipline is the most important thing to me.

Then begins Kenya Week! I have worked one week a month for the past six years in Nairobi, Kenya at three practices in the southern hemisphere. The change is a welcome break and I aim to see at least around 200 patients in the week at reduced costs. Kenya is home: where mom, dad and the doggies reside and where we get to see the most amazing sunsets and stars, and the weather and people just make it a treat. I own a clinic in Nairobi which works with the World Wildlife Fund; we donate to them at every new orthodontic patient start. Similarly in the UK we donate to the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary with the same case. I run the Nairobi Orthodontic Study Group once a

treating patients in orthodontics. My team has already isolated 1,500 specific genes that may be considered as part of the auxiliary network by which teeth move. We have tons of projects afoot.

Before I sleep I enter into another field: two hours of computer programming is needed as part of my latest course as a full stack developer. This is an important part of my career. The future is programming, neural networks, machine learning and dare I say it ... artificial intelligence. Dentistry will be part of this whether we like it or not. Bedtime needs to be early, just to ensure that I am able to wake up early and start the Sansara again.

My interests apart from orthodontics? Comedy, music and the 'clean and jerk'. I've gone back to power lifting. ■