BSPD Conference 2021

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Following the postponement of the 2020 British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 BSPD conference was always going to be a much anticipated event. This year's conference was held by BSPD's Merseyside branch and whilst I was saddened to not be revisiting my alumni city and nostalgically exploring the Liverpool Docks, the spirit of Liverpool was certainly brought to the living rooms of hundreds of attendees! The main conference ran from 5–6 October 2021, preceded by the Teachers' Branch Study Day on 4 October 2021.

The Teachers' Branch study day was a live event, chaired by Helen Rogers. The day kicked off with an inspiring talk from Sandra Zijlstra-Shaw who gave an excellent overview on what makes a good teacher and the importance of feedback in education. Together with Katie Ruaux, the pair showcased their project on co-creating a maxillofacial placement. Following this, Black Box Dentistry gave a stimulating presentation which shared lessons from the aviation industry to demonstrate the importance of recognising and minimising human factors to enhance safety and reduce risk within dentistry. Similarly, Fran O'Leary shared knowledge from her journey as a dentist becoming an ergonomist and gave some practical tips of human factors within the dental surgery, medical emergency bag and waiting areas. The 'Lessons in Leadership' session hosted several inspiring speakers including Laura Gartshore and Sarah Simpson who shared their experiences as women in leadership positions. Finally, the Teachers' Branch Study Day ended with Brett Duane and Ahmed Kahatab giving some top tips about holistic ways of providing more environmentally friendly dentistry, ranging from teledentistry to choice of surgical gowns.

The main conference opened with a warm welcome by Chair of BSPD Merseyside Branch, Clare Ledingham. The day started on a literal sugar high with the theme of 'Sugar Summit: Sugar, Obesity and Food Marketing'. The day began with nutritionist, Alison Tedstone, who gave a thorough overview of sugar policies and targets within the food industry. This was followed by a fascinating presentation by Dr Emma Boyland, an Experimental Psychologist who gave insight into the effects of digital marketing in the sugar industry upon children. Dr Boyland was aptly followed by the final talk of the session by Professor

Amandine Garde, who delivered a captivating presentation about children's human rights relating to the digital environment. The next session was 'Advocating for Vulnerable Children & Their Oral Health' where Charlotte Waite, Dr Aileen Naughton and Charlotte Waite (yes, another one!) spoke movingly about the impact of adverse childhood experiences in social deprivation, utilisation of the BDA casemix tool and creating targeted community programmes. The conference wouldn't be complete without the Annual General Meeting, which welcomed Professor Sondos Albadri as the BSPD's new President.

The final day of the conference included a session on 'Sights and Sounds of Childhood'. Dr Hannah Barham-Brown spoke vibrantly about her research into disabilities in the medical workplace and her own experiences as a doctor with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. Consultant Ophthalmologist, Dr Lola Solebo, gave a fascinating introduction to understanding the development of vision in children and shared some top tips for communicating in the dental environment with children who have visual impairments. Melanie Thomas presented a whistle-stop tour of the role of music therapy for children with a wide range of impairments and even applying this to children with neurodiversity. Consultant Paediatric Dentist, Sally Hibbert, shared a motivating presentation discussing the need for improved training, referral methods and accessibility in order to aid transitional care in paediatric dentistry.

Delegates were treated to a plethora of bite-size oral presentations including: Industry Sessions; Outstanding Innovation Awards; Research, Clinical Governance and Clinical Case Prizes; and easy access to the Poster Platform. The online set-up was well executed and included a Virtual Exhibition Platform and a Meeting Hub, enabling attendees to connect with each other and even allowing points and prizes for full utilisation of the platform. The main conference benefitted from a live stream linked to YouTube, allowing replaying of presentations on demand, therefore enabling the conference to fit in with today's working lives. There was plenty of fun, with some extra special sessions from Amanda Roberts' morning yoga and Dave Johnson's Balloon Modelling in Paediatric Dentistry. The Angel of the North Quiz was full of laughter and an exceptional tribute to the wonderful city of Liverpool.

Overall, whilst the BSPD's decision to postpone the 2020 conference followed by the decision to go virtual for 2021 must have been met with a heavy heart, they did an excellent job of providing a user-friendly conference platform and organising an impressive programme that enabled delegates to have a flexible approach to accessing the empowering content. Congratulations to all of the presenters and prize winners and an enormous thank you to BSPD for once again allowing the voices of paediatric dentistry to be heard. BSPD Merseyside Branch plans to host a spring study day in 2022 and the next annual BSPD conference will return in Cutlers' Hall Sheffield from 14–16 September 2022 and is themed 'Rights from the Start'. Further information can be found on the website soon at <https://bspdconference.org.uk/>. ■ ✦