

## Have your say on job satisfaction and morale



The British Dental Association (BDA) is calling on community dental service (CDS) and public dental service (PDS) dentists to have their say on job satisfaction, morale, motivation and the impact COVID-19 has had on them, their work and their service.

Members have been sent a personalised link or a paper questionnaire to participate and are urged to spare ten minutes to share their views as such responses are vital to the BDA's ability to submit robust arguments and evidence to the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) on issues of pay, retention, motivation and morale.

All members working in the CDS and PDS are welcome to participate by completing the questionnaire and helping the BDA to be the collective voice of dentistry. Those emailed an invitation and who would like to take part should respond by Sunday 14 August. The deadline for paper returns is Monday 8 August.

To thank members for their time, those who respond using their personalised questionnaire will be entered into a prize draw to win a £100 voucher. Information provided is treated confidentially and used only for research purposes. Collected data will be anonymised so it will not be possible to identify individuals in any outputs.

If you would like more information about this research, please contact [research@bda.org](mailto:research@bda.org).

## #Dentistry

Shaun Sellars continues his series on ethical dilemmas in dentistry which appears in every second issue of the *BDJ*.



I was recently gifted a copy of the BDA's *Ethical and legal obligations of dental practitioners* from 1982. This now sits proudly on my bookshelf alongside *The law and ethics of dental practice* published in 1950. Together, these books provide a fascinating insight into how dentistry has changed as a profession over the last few generations.

One of the more discernible changes is the attitude to advertising in dentistry. The stance in 1950 is clear: 'Any form of advertising to obtain patients is not only most unethical but also against the regulations of the Dental Board'. Little had changed in the 1980s when the BDA stated: 'It is strictly against the Dentists Act for a dental practitioner to engage in any form of advertising'. The contrast between then and now is stark, considering we now see a deluge of books, courses and websites dedicated to dental-specific marketing and sales. With its reliance on image and images, social media could have been designed to promote dentistry.

The advancement of commercialism in dentistry is characteristic of the neoliberal economics seen in the latter part of the twentieth century and the free-market economy that comes with it. As with most changes, this commercialisation has positive and negative sides. The strides seen in material science, for example, are unlikely to have been seen if dentistry had failed to move with the times.

However, the now commonplace sight of dentists promoting their work either to gain patients or purely for social media kudos is something we should all be wary of. We are not Del Boy trying to flog a suitcase full of knock-off watches. That's not to say that we're not in the business of sales. We absolutely are. But we should understand what our patients look for when they attend appointments and how that varies from our preconceptions.

In essence, we're not selling dentistry *per se* but the concept of dentistry as an aesthetic form of healthcare. Patients want to trust that we, as professionals, can deliver this for them predictably and comfortably. Practitioners must explain the advantages and disadvantages of treatment in an even-handed way, and patients should have time to consider their options. The idea, pushed by some, that we should simply 'sell the benefits' of treatment is morally and legally deficient. Equally, publishing before and after photographs of treatment outcomes on your social media, without due discussion of the stages in between, could be misleading to patients. As a rule, patients cannot judge the quality of the dentistry we carry out for them. They can only see the aesthetic results and experience how we make them feel throughout and after their treatment. The images used to promote our practice must not lead to unrealistic expectations of what's possible.

The dentists of previous generations couldn't have predicted what social media would even be, let alone its effect on healthcare. But they did know that promotion of the business of dentistry was fraught with dangers which we need to consider to stay professional.

## The New Writers' Workshop

The New Writers' Workshop will be held this year at the British Dental Association, 64 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8YS on Tuesday, 25 October 2022, starting at 11.00 am.

The programme for the day will cover the following aspects: 'Getting your submission right: hints and tips', 'The peer review process and the importance of reviewers', 'Group work reviewing a paper', 'Why editors reject papers', 'Open access, funding and Plan S' and 'Publication ethics'.

The fee for the workshop is £40 for members of the British Dental Editors and Writers Forum (BDEWF), £65 for non-BDEWF members and £20 for full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students. The fee includes lunch, tea and coffee and delegates will be eligible for five hours of CPD. Those wishing to register for the day should contact Fiona Feltham at [events@bda.org](mailto:events@bda.org).