

◀ to the environmental footprint has gained widespread attention. With particular relevance to dentistry is nitrous oxide, which constitutes roughly 6% of greenhouse emissions and has a lifespan of over 100 years.<sup>14</sup> Reducing leakages from hospital manifolds and gas capturing technology (eg Medclair's mobile destruction unit) could help cut NHS anaesthetic emissions. This technology can also be applied for the use of conscious sedation. However, nitrous oxide catalysing technologies are only just being piloted within dentistry in the UK, and come with a hefty price tag.

Where possible, patients should be supported to manage their dental treatment with local anaesthetic alone which has a much lower environmental impact. Patients with anxiety can be supported in secondary care, with the help of psychologists. This allows them to learn mindfulness techniques and undergo cognitive behavioural therapy to improve their compliance for treatment.

### 7. Go digital

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed communication within the health sector. The uptake of virtual appointments boomed, with 3 million virtual patient contacts made over a one-year period within NHS services<sup>15</sup> preventing 14.2k tonnes of carbon emissions. Digitisation is very cost effective and climate efficient.

Trying to implement the use of intra-oral scanners for impression taking reduces material usage and waste production;

this also reduces CO2 emissions from transportation to labs.

Virtual consultations reduce the need for patients to travel for appointments and in turn reduces amount of PPE, instruments and materials used. It is also more cost effective for patients as it reduces money spent on travel, car parking and care for dependants.

Virtual CPD reduces travel and the carbon footprint associated with resources such as handouts, registrations and catering.

### Conclusion

Urgent and drastic action is required to tackle the contribution of dental care to the climate emergency which undermines general health. Protecting and maintaining the health of patients should be at the forefront of our profession's direction, which emphasises the need to embed sustainability into clinical practice. ■

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## Child author seeks publisher for tooth fairy tale

Brittini D'Souza, eight, from London, is hoping to find a publisher for the story she wrote that was the winning entry in an Aquafresh competition in 2020.

*Are you waiting for your tooth fairy?*, written by Brittini when she was six, tells the story of a friendly monster called Hugo who helps a little girl called Amy to keep her teeth clean so that the tooth fairy leaves her a present.

The tooth fairy leaves a message for Amy that says:

'Up and down round and round  
Brush your teeth to the swishy swishy sound

Day and night, night and day  
Hide those chocolates and sweets away.'

The Aquafresh Brush Time Tales Competition invited primary school pupils to submit a two-minute story that they could listen to while brushing their teeth. Brittini's story was selected as the winner from hundreds of entries, earning her an iPad, illustrations of her story by *Famous Five* illustrator Becka Moor, and £500 of Oxford Reading Vouchers for her school.

Brittini's family hope to find a publisher for the story in the form of a short book or booklet that could be used by dentists with child patients.



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