

« Thursday and Fridays I may be working from home or away teaching.

Outside work, family is my number one interest – that includes my dog Cooper. We spend a lot of time in the Lake District walking, eating, drinking and relaxing. The last five years have seen me get back to my swimming career, something that was a huge part of my growing up. I competed to the age of about 20 and then played water polo to a high standard until my mid-30s. Kids and life got in the way, but I am now back in the pool training regularly and in the last two years I have been competing in Masters Swimming galas around the UK and loving it!

Weekends are special. Half of them are spent at our place in the Lake District. If we are not away then I try and get a swim in, walk the dog and socialise with friends and family. One of my favourite things to do at the weekend is to try out new recipes. I love to cook and spend Saturday or Sunday afternoon shopping for ingredients, prepping and cooking a meal and then enjoying the end product.

Next year my wife and I both turn 50 so we are currently planning how we are going to mark that occasion.

To dentists starting out in their careers, I would say that you have to do what is right for you at the time and follow what you love. You

get excellent training in many disciplines and be very competent to take referrals.

I have never stopped learning and still travel internationally to get the best training to enhance my skills. At my stage of career, I am very content with where I am and what I have

**'I still get a real buzz out of helping patients and saving teeth. Whilst the aesthetic side of my job is enjoyable, saving teeth and helping patients is still the thing that keeps me loving my clinical work.'**

may enjoy something that is not considered to be trendy but if you love what you do it can never be wrong! There is a lot to be said for having a niche that not many people do. That said, the pathway to specialisation is much better established these days and I think if you really want to be a specialist on the specialist list then you should set your sights on a specialist training pathway. Being on the specialist list is not the be all and end all and ultimately you can

achieved and I am trying to give back where I can with my work with the BSP and Dental Tubules. ■

**Interview by Kate Quinlan**

*If you would like to be interviewed for a 'day in the life of a dental specialist' please email [k.quinlan@nature.com](mailto:k.quinlan@nature.com).*

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## SDG COLUMN

# Engaging with the SDGs



Continuing with our cover series on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we reach SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing. The mission behind this goal is to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages, something all dental professionals play a key role in delivering. **Stephen Hancocks**, Editor-in-Chief, provides further insight into why this goal is so crucial and relevant to dentistry.

**H**istorically, in the UK particularly, we have focused on the mouth as our primary area of attention, sometimes it seems to the frank exclusion of all else, especially to the fact that there is a person somewhere attached to it. There is some explanation to this, even if no logical justification, as our main aim from the second half of the twentieth century onwards was the treatment of the ravages of disease, particularly caries. As we have valiantly managed to get this under some degree of control, we have also been able

to spend time to ask how this situation came about and what we might do to ensure it is not repeated.

Discovering the aetiology of the main oral conditions, we are in the difficult process of embracing prevention and shifting towards what is variously termed holistic care, whole body awareness and multidisciplinary practice. In essence, it is the realisation that far from being detached from the rest of our body, the mouth is both an important part of it and it, in turn, a vitally connected influence on the oral cavity. Oftentimes nowadays, we quote this

in terms of the parallel courses of diabetes and periodontal disease or cardiovascular conditions as headline linkages. However, the threads of interconnectedness run deep. Take minimal interventional dentistry, for example. At first consideration, what has this to do with good health and wellbeing? A short amount of consideration makes one realise that it is intimately involved with diet, lifestyle and perhaps as importantly, attitude.

An increasing number of our patients are now very knowledgeable about health and welfare, expecting not only to have answers to an immediate condition but how that impacts on their life, family and career. And if that seems a step too far too soon, consider for a moment our own situation as dental professionals being frequently advised with regards to work-life balance, avoiding burnout and taking care of ourselves (assuming that we already know well how best to guard our own oral health).

This is perhaps where the UN's SDGs have their greatest value in bringing into our daily routines a greater awareness of a wider world, literally and metaphorically. What do health and wellbeing have to do with me as a dental professional? Everything. ■