

« and habits. There are currently limited data on the oral health of communities in Jaffna and we wanted to make a small start in identifying areas of need within the population. We found in general, communities were resistant to filling in the questionnaire and speaking with local dentists, they advised us of certain cultural attitudes that may make data collection in the form of questionnaires challenging. This was definitely a point of reflection for us and is something we will consider as we prepare for our next visit to Jaffna.

Of a total of 11 responses with participants ranging from age 63–75, 91% participants fell under the category of a non-regular attendee at the dentist. This may be for a variety of reasons, access and availability of

dentists being the primary one, but requires further exploration. Forty-five percent of participants reported using a herbal fluoride-free toothpowder to brush their teeth and 36% reported pain from their gums. Of this small cohort, no-one reported to be using paan (chewing tobacco), which we found notable as this practice is extremely prevalent in South Asian countries.

The trip allowed us to form long-lasting links with the local healthcare staff and we hope to visit again in a few years with a larger team and more resources to help play a small part in uplifting the oral and systemic health in the region. We are very grateful for the opportunity and to Dr Kumaralogini Ganeshan and her team for the work they do in this area of high dental need. ■ *



Annual Robin Davies DCP Research Awards take place in London

The annual Robin Davies DCP Research Awards luncheon was held in November to celebrate the 2023 award winners. The celebration was held at Linden House, London and was attended by leaders of dentistry from across the UK. The Oral and Dental Research Trust (ODRT) partner with Colgate annually to offer a £5,000 research grant to award winners, exclusively dental care professionals (DCPs).

The keynote speaker for this event was acting Chief Dental Officer for England, Jason Wong, who said ‘The Robin Davies DCP Research Awards, I believe, are still unique in providing DCPs the opportunity to carry out research. In many cases, this is the first introduction to research methodology for those who have never previously been involved in research.’

Sir Nairn Wilson, ODRT Trustee, invited the 2023 awardees to share their proposals with the audience.

Dental nurse Helen Bullingham is investigating if oral healthcare training can enhance parent confidence in their ability to influence their child’s oral health, increasing toothbrushing episodes and reducing challenging toothbrushing behaviour of autistic children.



(Left to right): Lone Lenés from Colgate, Emma Van Eyssen from Colgate, Mark Thurston, Helen Bullingham, Tracey Kinsella, Laura McClune (on behalf of Nikki Legg), Rob Marcys from Colgate and Jessica Hulme from Colgate, at the Robin Davies DCP Research Awards luncheon

Mark Thurston, dental nurse and student dental hygienist and therapist, aims to evaluate the effectiveness of an integrated care plan with accessible elements using a nursing model in enhancing communication and referrals between healthcare and dental teams for people who live in residential services.

Dental nurse Nikki Legg is working towards gaining an understanding of the difficulties faced by children and staff in Special Educational Needs (SEN) Schools in relation to oral hygiene and diet.

Dental hygienist Tracey Kinsella will be focused on determining the level of confidence in Critical Care Nurses and Health Care Support Workers providing oral care to individuals who are intubated/mechanically ventilated.

Colgate and the ODRT are pleased to be hosting this event once again, with the next celebration planned for Wednesday 8 May 2024. Applications close on Friday 9 February 2024. For more details visit www.odrt.org.uk/award/colgate-robin-davies-dcp-awards.