

# WELCOME to the first Vital letters page.

This is your page to write to and open up topics for debate, reply to each other and offer advice. The letters we have for this issue are wide in their scope, from questionable parenting attitudes to career progression. What are your thoughts and contributions? These can be about your profession only or about working in dentistry in general.

SEND YOUR LETTERS to: the Editor, Vital, Publishing Directorate, British Dental Association, 64 Wimpole Street, London W1E 2UZ or email vital@bda.org. Authors must sign the letter, which may be edited for reasons of space.



Our star letter writer will receive a Sonnet Black Laque fountain pen (£90 RRP) courtesy of Parker Pens.

## ★ Star Letter

With the advent of statutory registration looming I wonder how much thought has been given to the consequences of the 'grandparenting clause' arrangements.

As dental nurses we are all being guided towards the qualification path, certainly it will be a requirement that a formal qualification is gained by all nurses entering the profession when statutory registration is adopted formally.

What concerns me is that large numbers of unqualified dental nurses will be registered via the 'grandparenting' route, these nurses although having years of experience may know very little about cross infection control or health and safety policies. This may be through no fault of their own, if they have not had access to training in these procedures they may be unwittingly carrying on bad practice.

All new nurses will have to undergo training in these very important subjects, I would like to see some sort of compulsory training procedure laid down for those seeking entry to the statutory register via the 'grandparenting' route, perhaps by the completion of NVQ units DN01 and DN02.

**Sue Wright**  
Dental Nurse, Suffolk



Compulsory training for all?

## Career pathways for nurses

I am writing to you with the hope that you may be able to clarify the current situation regarding PCDs working in practice.

After the initial excitement of the Nuffield report, published, I believe at least four years ago, very little has been suggested to members of the dental team offering guidelines regarding the development of PCDs, their qualifications or indeed their role within modern dentistry.

As a qualified nurse I believe that if I intended to further my career within dentistry the natural route would be to study hygiene and/or therapy. For many nurses this is not always the preferred option. The dental nurse plays a vital role in the delivery of quality dentistry. Those of us who wish to nurse and continue our personal development are unsure how to remain in our chosen career while achieving this.

Is there a structured path that nurses can pursue in order to further our skills and knowledge of dentistry and assisting whilst

maintaining full time employment in our current positions?

Are there suggested guidelines for principal members of the dental team to refer to while encouraging and monitoring their employees? Can you offer any advice on how or where like-minded nurses can seek advice on their changing role within dentistry?

**Gemma Jones,**  
Dental Nurse, London

• Career pathways will be featured in the next issue of Vital, Spring 2004.

## Lost for words

Any suggestions for a polite retort to a patient when they tell their 5-year-old daughter 'we've come to see if the dentist is going to put you to sleep or if he's going to rip your tooth out while you scream'. After 19 years as a dental nurse/oral health educator/receptionist promoting positive dental experience I despair.

**Alison Henry**  
Dental Nurse/Receptionist  
Essex

## Time ripe for new magazine

We would like to wish you and your team the very best on the launch of your new magazine for PCDs.

The dental team is a key essential to the success of any practice. What an inspiration it was for our team when the editor of a new publication came to our practice to ask us what they would want from a magazine dedicated to PCDs. The key topic for us: Orthodontic Therapists. This is a subject we would very much like to be kept updated on.

We also see the recognition of Professions Complementary to Dentistry through our regulating bodies. The movement forward for

PCDs is accelerating at an incredible pace with the awaited introduction of registration for dental nurses in 2004.

The focus on the dental team is immense. Continually in the dental press there are articles about practices achieving the Investor in People award, truly a sign of commitment to and by the dental team.

Dentistry is indeed a great profession to be in at this time.

**Sandra Lynch**  
Group Coordinator  
Angle House Orthodontics, London

## Clinical questions

Do you ever come across a problem or situation at work, and wonder what everyone else does in the same situation?

This page will be for your clinical quandaries and questions and then, hopefully, the answers or suggested solutions from other people who have had a similar problem and how they got around it. Don't be shy. If its bothering you then the chances are someone else out there is asking exactly the same question. Write to Clinical Questions at the above address or email vital@bda.org.