

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 discuss the importance of being appreciated and dental nurse training. What are your thoughts and contributions? These can be about your profession only or about working in dentistry in general.



★ Star Letter

Appreciation more important than money

First, may I congratulate you on *Vital*, it is both informative and interesting. One of the few publications that the whole dental team can enjoy. I recently read the star letter from Stephen Bray, in which he says he values his nurses. How many other dentists can say that?

Speaking as a dental nurse in a busy practice, to feel valued as an important member of the team is more important to me than the Christmas bonus. If we, as dental nurses feel valued we will in turn work harder to ensure that the practice is a success. A simple thank you from the dentist is very appreciated.

If I feel that the dentist doesn't appreciate me, I in turn feel that it is not worth my while working hard.

What do other dental nurses think?

Heather Murphy

RDN, Northern Ireland

Vital responds: The importance of your relationship with your dentist will be the Perspectives topic in the Winter issue of Vital.

Acknowledgement

Parts of Liane Voisey's article 'Advising on Nutrition', *Vital Spring*: 46-48, were based on an article written by Juliette Reeves, 'But Mummy, I Want A Mars Bar,' *smile-on.com* May 2002. Credit for Juliette's contribution was omitted and we wish to apologise for this oversight.

Dental nurse training in crisis?

I am writing to express the grave concern of the committee of the Norfolk and Norwich Section of the BDA that, with the forthcoming requirement for registration of dental nurses, the only training courses for the diploma in Kings Lynn and in Norwich have been recently discontinued, and that there is a lack of trained assessors to undertake the NVQ exams.

A recent survey showed there to be at least sixty untrained nurses in Norfolk, and this is likely to be an underestimate of local needs. Although steps are being taken to establish new routes of training locally, there is, currently, no provision for most dental practices in Norfolk and hence it would be helpful if the 'run in' time for mandatory registration could be revised dramatically.

This situation is so grave in Norfolk that it makes us wonder what the situation is like in other areas in the UK. Perhaps others in a similar situation to us would like to write in to Vital to express their concern also, which would give an idea of the picture throughout the UK.

Linda Hillman

Immediate past Chair, Norfolk and Norwich Section BDA

Vital responds:

Things may not be as bad as Linda Hillman fears. The key issue may be the awareness (or lack of) of the experience route to registration with the GDC, which many of the 60

untrained nurses may have met by 2007.

For a period of two years from when the register opens dental nurses who do not have recognised qualifications but have experience will be able to apply to register. Dental nurses will require four years full-time experience in the past eight years or the part-time equivalent to qualify.

Additionally, once the transitional period ends in 2007, both registered dental nurses and dental nurses in training for a registrable qualification will be allowed to work as dental nurses. Therefore statutory registration will not exclude dental nurse employees who are in training for a relevant dental nurse qualification from working.

However, the GDC recognises that although the experience route will work for many, there may be a considerable proportion of dental nurses who will not qualify for registration on this basis. In direct response to this the GDC approved a new route for registration at its Council Meeting on September 2.

'Access to Registration Training' (ART) will be open to nurses who have at least two years' experience (either full-time or the part-time equivalent, which would be 500 working days) but will not be able to achieve four years by the end of the transitional period. For initial information on ART see news, page 6. Further details will be included in the Winter issue of Vital.

For further information on registration routes for dental nurses see our feature on page 18.

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.

