

This is your page to write to and open up topics for debate, reply to each other and offer advice. One letter we have for this issue calls for more therapists to be trained instead of more dentists. What are your thoughts and contributions? Letters can be about your profession only or about working in dentistry in general.

## ★ Star Letter

### Call for more therapists, *not* dentists

I read with dismay the recent announcements by Minister for Health Dr John Reid concerning the plans to resuscitate NHS Dental Care. The present Government are hell bent on a package that will do nothing for the basic ailments that bedevil the attempts to deliver decent oral healthcare to the population.

1. Patients – by stealth and ever increasing charges over the years – fund the greater part of treatment at point of use. This amounts to a massive injection of capital and is an outrageous imposition in a National Health Service purported to deliver the health needs of the population without charge when required. Why is it that the mouth and oral healthcare are some totally different deal? Imagine what would happen if in a comparable situation some little old lady was asked to pay £370.00 or so towards a necessary hip replacement procedure! Every tabloid and media outlet would be screaming in a millisecond. Whilst no one protests this will of course continue despite it being so hugely illogical.
2. Dr Reid tells us that “The equivalent (sic) of 1,000 dentists will be recruited by October 2005” Why? It seems that many from outside the UK will be fast tracked in the desperation to fill manpower needs whilst standards slide even further. What is the justification for this influx of dental professionals?
3. Dr Reid delivers a pledge to fund 170 extra undergraduate training places from October 2005. Why? What we really need are dental therapists and hygienists. Dentists are largely over trained to deal with the large amounts of the relatively simple treatment procedures that are needed to stabilise oral health in the population. Advanced restorative procedures will be in the minority. Dental therapists can be trained in 27 months to do much of the restorative dentistry needed and hygienists in even less time to deal with the important basic periodontics.

What then as an alternative to the above, do the people of the UK deserve?

1. Remove NHS charges, put the mouth back in the body and properly re-integrate dental care into the rest of the NHS.
2. Salaries for all NHS dentists and a fair rent from the DoH

to practice principals for existing and already capitalised practice premises.

3. Practice teams (the ‘professions complimentary to dentistry’) to have direct salaried contracts with the DoH. Registration, accredited training, and continuing professional development programmes to be mandatory to enable this.
4. Train more therapists and hygienists (especially therapists) not dentists.
5. Revise the availability of ‘luxury items’ within NHS regulations.

John Reid said “Dental services will be properly integrated with the rest of the NHS providing better access to services and an improved patient experience.” How, is this to happen under such a programme?

Yours faithfully

*Dr K. F. Marshall, Specialist in Restorative Dentistry, Surrey*



Dr Marshall calls for more therapists and hygienists, not dentists

# Support for the NVQ

I have just read the star letter in regards to Dental Nurses and the NVQ. This is a great opportunity for dental nurses to have a recognised qualification and not just treated as assistant to the dentist. I am fed up to the back teeth (excuse the pun) of being called this after all a dentist could not survive without us!

I have been a dental nurse for 6 years now and am now training for my A1 award in assessing and cannot wait to get out there and help guide candidates in the right way of dental nursing.

Yes it is going to take time to get this NVQ off the ground but we must keep pushing for it as it is defiantly the right path for dental nursing to take.

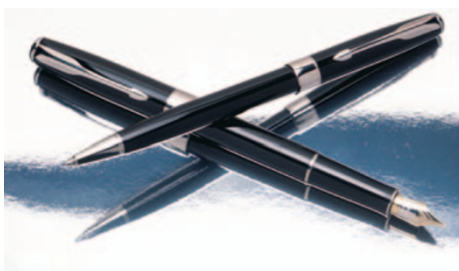
*Mrs Jane Beauchamp,  
Dental Nurse*

*Vital responds:*

*Many thanks to Jane for her letter, she will be interested in the article on becoming an NVQ assessor on page 24.*

SEND YOUR LETTERS to: the Editor,  
Vital Magazine, BDJ, Nature Publishing Group,  
4-6 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW or email  
vitaleditorial@nature.com. Authors must sign the  
letter, which may be edited for reasons of space.

**Our star letter writer  
will receive a Sonnet  
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of Parker Pens.**



## Spring Diary

### London BADT Regional Meeting

**Date:** 16.04.05  
**Venue:** Q Clinic in Harley Street, London  
**Contact:** 0118 947 9399  
**Website:** www.badt.org.uk

### BADT and BDHA South Wales and South West Regional Study Day

**Date:** 23.04.05  
**Venue:** The Castle Hotel, Castle Green, Taunton, Somerset  
**Contact:** Jane Lewis – 0118 9482 651  
**Website:** www.badt.org.uk

### Dental Sedation Teachers' Group Annual Symposium 2005

**Date:** 26.04.05  
**Venue:** The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow  
**Contact:** 0141 221 6072  
**Website:** www.dstg.co.uk

### BADN 2005 Annual Dental Nursing Conference

**Date:** 29.04.05-01.05.05  
**Venue:** Gatwick Renaissance Hotel  
**Contact:** 01253 338360  
**Website:** www.badn.org.uk

### British Dental Association Conference and Exhibition 2005

**Date:** 19-21.05.05  
**Venue:** Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC), Glasgow  
**Contact:** 020 7563 4590  
**Website:** www.bda-events.org

### PCD Roadshows

**Date:** 22 March 2005  
**Venue:** Everglades Hotel, Derry  
**Date:** 23 March 2005  
**Venue:** Europa Hotel, Belfast

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DRY  
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OFFERS  
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AND  
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