

vital
for the whole dental team



VITAL for the whole dental team

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Attention!

A warm welcome to the autumn edition of *Vital*. In this issue we set ourselves a lofty aim, namely to have something for every member of the dental team and I think we have achieved it.

Starting with the cover feature (see page 29), we asked Army Dentist Captain Riaz Usmani to tell us about life in the Army and what it was like working in a field hospital in Iraq.

His fascinating account describes the highs, such as keeping soldiers fit and healthy for front-line duties, to the lows of assisting in surgery for colleagues with facial gunshot wounds.

In his second piece (see page 31) Riaz gives us a tour of the Defence Dental Services, which are responsible for the dental healthcare of all personnel in the Army, Navy, and RAF.

In this account he explains the origins of dentistry in the armed forces, which a few hundred years ago sometimes involved soldiers using gunpowder to blow out a rotten tooth and sometimes their jawbone!

Things have obviously moved on ... and Riaz explains how rewarding and challenging a career in the Services can be for a professional complementary to dentistry (PCD).

We strive to give you the latest career advice and this month we asked dental nurse tutor Kathryn Marshall to explain the latest teaching aid for dental nurses (see page 23).

Kathryn tells us about DNART, a CD-ROM based tutorial that aims to help nurses get up to scratch before formal registration begins next year.

Julie Ferry has been interviewing dental teams up and down the country and has been asking how we can improve communication among team members (see page 14).

And dental technicians are the focus of this month's Spotlight (see page 12), where Julie asks these often forgotten but key team members to explain what they do.

We look at the growing trend for PCDs to provide smoking cessation advice.

This subject has split the dental community with some arguing it goes beyond the team's remit while others say PCDs are perfectly placed to help smokers quit.

Dental therapist Elaine Tilling writes about her experiences in helping patients to give up and how she has been a leading advocate for PCDs to take on this role (see page 26).

This year marks the 125th anniversary of *Vital's* sister publication the *British Dental Journal*. In one form or another, PCDs have been helping out their dentist colleagues for at least as long. We asked Christopher Sell to look at the past, present and future of PCDs (see page 16).

We wrap up this issue with all the regulars, including the latest news, excellent reviews, holiday ideas, another prize-winning crossword, and a great Last Word from the Editor-in-Chief Stephen Hancocks.

We hope you'll agree there is something for all the team but if we missed something do let us know.

Haroon Ashraf, Editor

