These pages offer you the chance to open topics for debate, discuss latest issues, or even offer advice to fellow readers. In this issue a dental nurse speaks out against registration. Send us your views on these issues or anything to do with working in the dental profession. We look forward to hearing from you.

We don't need no registration

Firstly I would like to say how impressed I was when a copy of the current issue (Autumn) of the *Vital* magazine arrived with the *British Dental Nurses' Journal* this month. I have not seen it before and I found it to be a very interesting issue and easy to read – excellent.

I felt I had to write a reply to the letter 'Registration is not useful' and I can quite understand how the five ladies feel. If a dental nurse has not got the respect of the dentist with whom s/he works now, being registered is not going to make any difference, if anything it could make things worse as a feeling of 'threat' may take over.

Also until all dentists understand that they really are going to have to pay dental nurses better salaries, right from the start, the shortage of trainee nurses will only get worse, and the thought of having to pay for the privilege of your appreciation in the surgery will be a 'turn off' even for the most enthusiastic soul.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and hopefully another copy of *Vital* will arrive with the post again soon.

A. Pritchard RDN, Oral Health Educator, Berks

Vital Asked Pam Swain of the BADN to reply:

Registration is primarily about protecting the patient. Patients have the right to know that everyone working at chairside is properly trained and qualified to fulfill their role, and is accountable. Registration provides this reassurance.

Yes, salaries are an issue. However, one of the reasons dentists are able to get away with paying minimum wage (or less!) is because they can employ as dental nurses anyone willing to work for that little

money. Registration will mean that dentists can only employ registered dental nurses. Supply and demand will mean that employers will have to offer more in order to attract RDNs to their practices. This means not just salaries, but working conditions in general.

Registration will – eventually – increase recruitment to dental nursing as it becomes a recognised profession with rights and responsibilities (one of which is unfortunately paying a registration fee!).

See also our interview on page 16 for Pam's further views on registration.

Please SEND YOUR LETTERS, which may be edited for reasons of space, to:

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Write to us for our **Summer 2006** issue and you could be the lucky winner of our **Star Letter writer competition**. Apart from the obvious glory you will then receive a collection of the latest **Colgate Oral Health Professional products** (£100 RRP) courtesy of Colgate.