

ITP for DCPs

David Hannington, an Introduction to Practice for Dental Therapists Tutor, describes a scheme for DCPs set up at Cardiff University, modelled on the Vocational Training undertaken by dentists.

The Department of Medical and Dental Postgraduate Education at Cardiff University set up the Introduction to Practice (ITP) scheme for DCPs in autumn 2003. The ethos behind setting up the course was the recognition that a move towards a more team based approach in general practice was desirable and also a likely consequence of changes to the General Dental Services (GDS) system, with the advent of Personal Dental Services (PDS) and the new dental contract.

We wanted to organise a course which would give support and a protected environment to nurture DCPs in their initial months in general practice. This would be achieved by placing them in inspected, approved practices which would provide the right physical and educational environment to allow them to acclimatise to the particular skills required in practice. The structure of the course would come from a programme of study days on various relevant topics, backed up by a system of tutorials/reflective learning diaries to facilitate the interaction between the DCP and their

trainer. Those familiar with the structure of the Vocational Training course for dentists will see we have modelled it on that proven system.

The course allows ongoing education whilst still working and earning and gaining experience but with a 'helping hand' structure running alongside.

At present we have a mixture of hygienists and therapists undergoing the programme and are always keen to attract more DCPs. Hygiene places commence in August and therapists in January. We have a maximum of 10 places throughout the year and have a wide choice of practices throughout Wales. These are advertised at the relevant times and brochures are published allowing potential applicants to select which practices they are interested in taking a look at. Participants need not be newly qualified but could be moving from another branch of dentistry eg community – or could be returning from a career break.

DCPs are employed by the training practice for three days per week allowing the balance of their time to be worked in other practices if they wish (or the training practice if this is mutually agreeable). This allows maximum flexibility and also provides an assured

income free of targets, as well as sick and holiday pay.

The course also funds membership of the relevant professional organisation (BADT or BDHA) and registration with the GDC.

The entire study day programme is eligible for CPD and fostering the concept of lifelong education is an important part of the course, again laying the foundations for forthcoming changes relevant to the registration requirements for DCPs. We have a very active DCP section within the postgraduate department which will continue the educational relationship once the 12-month course has finished.

We feel that at the end of the course our ITP practitioners will have been provided with a good grounding in general practice and ongoing interest and contact with their colleagues.

Having a supportive network in place can avoid the isolation which is sometimes a feature of early days in practice.

We are very pleased to be involved in taking the steps towards raising the profile of the practice as a team concept and would be keen to provide further information as required.

For more information on the scheme contact:

Mr David Hannington, ITP Tutor or
Miss Kate Williams, ITP Secretary
Dental Postgraduate Department,
Grove Mews, 1 Coronation Road,
Birchgrove, Cardiff CF14 4QY
Email: williamskl9@cardiff.ac.uk
Telephone: 029 2054 4984

DCPs
on a study
day enjoying
a break.



What's happening in your PCT?

Is your surgery involved with any special events or schemes, or been rewarded for innovation?

If you are interested in being featured in a **Focus on**, contact

Arveen Bajaj on a.bajaj@nature.com or telephone **020 7843 3679**.

STRUCTURE OF THE SCHEME

Duration of the course: 12 months

Start dates are January for therapists and August for hygienists

The Study Day Course

Study Days are organised by the ITP Tutor and include lectures/demonstrations, conference trips and trade exhibitions. All are eligible for CPD. These count as a paid day.

Employment details

- The course will provide a salaried three day per week position in an approved practice in Wales.
- You can apply to any of the approved practices and choose where you would like to work.
- You will be on a fixed salary. This will allow you to manage patients free from financial pressures. This is in contrast with a fee per item arrangement where payment is based on the amount of work that is done. You also have the benefit of an assured income from the end of the first month in practice. You will be employed on a formal contract.

DCPs will work in a general practice where the principal has been appointed as a Trainer having been judged to offer the guidance and the environment necessary to allow experience to be gained of general practice in a supportive and non-pressurised manner.

You are free to work the other two days per week wherever you wish, allowing maximum flexibility.

Getting through dental fear with CBT: a young person's guide H. Chapman, N. Kirby-Turner Blue Stallion £4.95 ISBN: 190412707X

This book describes a type of therapy called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, or CBT, which has been shown to be effective for many problems, including phobias. CBT is widely used by psychologists and therapists to help patients to face going to the dentist and accepting required treatment.

I found the book to be well laid out with lots of information and coping strategies for anyone with dental fear. Although aimed at young people, I felt that it could be equally useful to adults. It was quick and easy to read, though sometimes I found it to be a bit repetitive.

I'm not sure that young people would read this book, unless an adult worked through it

with them – a parent, carer or DCP. Rather than expecting a young person to go away and read the book, it would perhaps be more appropriate to pick out specific areas which might help them.

Having two young people at home, one aged 16, one 14 (albeit not dental phobic), I asked them both to read the book. They managed the first two or three pages before losing interest and said that they found some of the words quite complicated and technical.

I personally feel that CBT is a useful tool for anyone with fears/phobias of any nature and think that it is something that dental professionals should be made more aware of and put into use in clinical situations.

Arlene Aiton, Dental Therapist



Periodontology for the dental hygienist Third edition D. A. Perry, P. L. Beemsterboer Elsevier £26.99 ISBN: 1416001751

This is the third edition of this textbook, the first being published some 10 years ago in 1996. Not being familiar with either the book or its authors I was a little concerned at it being an American publication. I wondered if differences in terminology or spelling would present a distraction to me or if current thinking in America would differ to that in the UK. This concern very quickly disappeared; it was not an issue at all.

The book approaches and presents its subject matter in a logical manner. It begins with the background to the study of periodontology, moves forward to the scientific basis of periodontal treatment and then applies it to the clinical environment, with a lot more in between. It covers all aspects of periodontology from the patient assessment to the surgical and non-surgical approach and therapeutic treatments available.

I found the book very easy to read and follow. I was able to read it while on my way to work, in my lunch hour and at home after a busy day. The language used in the book is pitched perfectly for both

the qualified and the student dental hygienist.

The material in this book is organised and delivered clearly with a common theme running through each chapter. Each chapter begins with a set of learning objectives and key headings; for the student dental hygienist this could be an ideal method of self assessment, testing their understanding of the topics covered in a particular chapter. The question and answer sections that can be found at the end of each chapter can be used in the same way. For these reasons I think that the book would be a favourable addition to the bookshelf of any dental hygiene tutor as well.

A mention must be given to both the diagrams/tables and the colour photographs in the book. The photos are as accurate as any you might find in a colour atlas textbook and the tables are ideal for revision or as a reference tool. All are supported by a thoroughly exhaustive text.

This book is so versatile; it is a textbook which should be added to the reading list of the student dental hygienist and a reference book which would be invaluable in any dental hygienist's surgery.

Vicky Williams RDH Dip OHE

