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LETTER

Love it!

I have just been reading the spring issue of *Vital* with regard to Facebook groups. It is the first time I have read the magazine as it was introduced to me by a new dentist who came to the practice I work in only a few weeks ago. I just wanted to tell you I absolutely loved reading *Vital* and found the articles really interesting. I particularly found the communication article beneficial to read as it can often be challenging to know how to deal with anxious children.

Up until last month I didn't consider myself a proper dental nurse or a professional, but as a result of the new dentist joining our practice and the encouragement I have received, I am really taking an interest in my career and am well on my way to completing my NVQ and getting registered.

Thanks for a brilliant read!

Faye Colmer, by email

Faye wins Beverly Hills Formula products worth £100.



More issues please!

I work in a (I think the only) NHS dental practice in Solihull, West Midlands and receive *Vital* at work through one of our members of staff. He kindly gives it to me to pass around the practice. I have to say I really enjoy reading it, as does my sister, who's a hygienist. The only thing is that the latest issue of *Vital* came on Saturday and I took it home to read and finished it by Sunday night! That might make me sound a bit nerdy – but once every three months is too long between issues!

I've joined some of the Facebook sites that you mentioned in your last editorial (*Dental nurses rock*; *Vital* spring 2008 page 3). Congratulations on a great magazine that always has something interesting to read for the whole team!

Tina Kelly, Dental Nurse

Editor's note: Thank you to Tina for her kind words, which are very encouraging to the team here at Vital. I'm sorry to say there are no plans at present to produce more issues of Vital per year, but with all of our readers' support and help spreading the word about Vital and our website (www.nature.com/vital), more issues could become a reality in the future!

The British Association of Dental Nurses, BADN, also has a group on Facebook. Check it out!

His bibs

Further to the article *Our complete service is unique* (*Vital* spring 2008 pages 36-37), I really find it amazing that the 'proverbial' plastic bib appears in the article with a photograph of the patient. I wonder if this is changed for each patient or, as I suspect, reused with cross contamination issues. Perhaps it has even just been brought out for the picture by the look of it. I would comment that a truly twenty-first century dental practice should use DISPOSABLE bibs, especially highlighted by the other article *At the sharp end of general dental practice* (*Vital* spring 2008 pages 40-43) in the same issue regarding blood borne viruses.

I note that these bibs appear with frequent regularity in many high profile articles and pictures. Back to basics I think!

Nigel D'Souza, Manchester

Dan Shaffer, the dentist featured in the above-mentioned article, responds: the bib was fresh out of the packet for the photoshoot and at present we are using them as one use only bibs and so therefore they do not constitute any kind of cross infection risk.



Men: add your voice

I have been a dental nurse for many years now. I went for work experience at 15 years old whilst still at school and have been working ever since. I'm still just as passionate about my patients and still thoroughly love my job.

What I still find surprising is that patients are surprised that I am a male dental nurse.

A lot of patients will ask, 'When are you going to be a dentist?' I always think you would never ask a female dental nurse that, or ask a male medical nurse when they are going to be a doctor!

Thankfully I have met a few other male dental nurses (but only a few). Some are just in it for the short term, but all say how much they love/loved it – yes even the ones still doing the job (although we do like to grumble about the jobs irrespective of gender from time to time).

At the end of the day to become a good, or even a great, dental nurse comes down to how much you care about your patients, and how much you want to put into your job. The job is a constant learning experience, and you have to be driven, as part of the team, to follow any task to at least a satisfactory conclusion, irrespective of the problem.

I do hear that there are a large number of male dental nurses in the Armed Forces but what about in public/private sectors? I run a male dental nurse group on the website Facebook, but with only 15 male members – I have no idea how many of us are really out there!

Both I and the other members of the group would love to hear from other male dental nurses and find out their stories. So any other male dental nurses out there, get on a computer and add your voice to the group!

Alistair Parker, by email