

## AROUND THE WORLD



In Thailand fake 'fashion' braces are being worn by teenagers without a need for orthodontic treatment, as fixed appliance therapy is seen as expensive and 'cool'.



In Senegal and other parts of West Africa, women are having their gums permanently (and painfully) dyed black, as darker gums are deemed a sign of beauty.



Twigs from the *Salvadora persica* (arak) tree are used by Arab Bedouin tribes to clean their teeth. *Miswak* sticks, as they are known, contain antiseptic properties.



A craze for LED mouthguard-esque inserts has taken off in Japan to make your smile literally light up the room, advertised as a 'party in your mouth'.



In Australia, Aboriginal holy men pierce their tongues as a way to take evil spirits out of the body.

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## HAVING FAITH IN FLOSSING

New research shows that regular dental flossing is improved with a combination of self-efficacy and self-monitoring.<sup>1</sup>

A Berlin study investigated the combined roles of self-efficacy – the belief in one's own ability to complete tasks – and self-monitoring – an individual's ability to monitor the completion of tasks, such as the use of a calendar – when predicting the frequency of dental flossing as part of a person's dental routine.

A study of 287 university students, aged 19–26, examined whether a self-regulatory intervention would make a difference to flossing behaviours by comparing an intervention group, active control group and passive control group.

The study found that interventions led to an increase in dental flossing regardless of experimental conditions. However, differential effects were visible for self-efficacy and self-monitoring confirming that the mindset of the participants had changed and that both play a mediating role in facilitating flossing.

1. Schwarzer R, Antoniuk A, Gholami M. A brief intervention changing oral self-efficacy, self-efficacy, and self-monitoring. *Br J Health Psychol* 2014; DOI: 10.1111/bjhp.12091 [Epub ahead of print].

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## CONFERENCE REVIEWS

## THE NINTH ANNUAL YOUNG DENTIST CONFERENCE

The ninth annual Young Dentist Conference was held at the Royal College of Physicians in London on 8 February 2014. Specifically aimed at young dentists like myself in the early stages of our careers, it provided a good insight into various different practices and opinions within the profession.

Chris O'Connor started the day with a captivating talk on rubber dams, 'Are you isolated?' As we know, with little experience, placing a rubber dam can be time consuming and challenging, and Chris shared practical tips and videos from his experience and practice.

Ken Harris discussed his private practice and various aspects of cosmetic dentistry on the topic 'I thought my veneers were permanent?' This lecture covered some interesting aspects of aesthetic dentistry that many young dentists have not previously explored, including managing patient expectations, assessing patients, what can be achieved, pitfalls and valid consent.

I had been asked to speak on the topic 'This is your life: decisions and dilemmas post dental school'. This was my first experience of speaking to an audience of 170 delegates. Dick Birkin kindly introduced me and I began sharing my thoughts, opportunities and concerns I have faced in the real world of dentistry. Having completed a DFY1 and DFY2 year as well as working in practice I discussed 'carving your career' as a young dentist and the importance of communication before finishing with a few of my own top tips for survival in and out of the workplace. In essence it is important that we tailor our paths in the profession to ourselves. There is no right or wrong in our career steps as each one of us is different resulting in varying individual choices. When planning

for the future it is useful to appreciate that we all have a well-deserved, solid foundation of a BDS to work up from.

Dr Paul Redmond finished the day with a very entertaining and interactive lecture entitled 'Misunderstood'. He discussed interactions between different generations including 'Boomers', 'Generation X', 'Generation Y' and 'Millennials', covering preferences and traits of each group. Practical tips were shared to enhance communication and understanding between generations with observation on how technology is moving society in a different direction.

Conference opportunities for young dentists like this one are very limited. The professional but informal atmosphere allowed attendees to interact easily and confidently with the speakers. Delegates were given the opportunity to participate in a question and answer session after each lecture and there were regular intervals with satisfying refreshments throughout. Overall, this was a great conference to attend with a range of speakers and I noted that we all have something unique to bring to the profession. With an opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and gain valuable information from the sponsoring companies it is an event every young dentist should attend at least once.

Two years ago I attended this conference as a delegate and I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to share my experiences with fellow young dentists within the profession. A great experience – thank you BDA and DPL.

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(PICTURED)

