

Access to orthodontists to be increased

Orthodontists gathered in Brighton for the British Orthodontic Conference on 23-25 September 2016, where Chief Dental Officer Sara Hurley indicated that the future of orthodontic commissioning is guaranteed.

Sara Hurley said that the number of units of orthodontic activity (UOAs) expended in the last financial year went down by nearly 1% and as a result there could be more NHS orthodontic treatment for young patients.



She congratulated orthodontists saying that the reduction in UOAs was testament to the rigorous application of the recall approach they had adopted, adding: 'We can increase access to your fantastic care – well done for that.'

Professors Kevin O'Brien and Lysle Johnston, two of the most eminent orthodontic academics in the world, joined forces to discuss evidence-based treatment, in Professor Johnston's words, 'to try and reverse the apparent drift towards cosmetology.'

Professor O'Brien discussed his blog and his most successful post ever, called 'I have decided to become an orthodontic quack and snake oil salesman.' The challenge for patients, he said, is that treatments without evidence but promoted by people who couch their words in certainty can seem as appealing as the treatments backed up by evidence but couched in uncertainty.

The Northcroft lecture was delivered by Professor Tony Ireland who discussed orthodontic materials past, present and future. He took his audience through the history of orthodontic materials starting with the Ancient Greeks four centuries BC moving forward to the future development of SMART materials which might include elastomeric which can tell when oral hygiene is poor.

The conference included parallel sessions for orthodontic nurses and therapists and the Orthodontic Technicians Association held their conference alongside the BOC.

White gloves presented in Cardiff

The presentation of 'white gloves' to the dean is a tradition in a number of dental schools within the UK to mark the occasion when a full cohort of presenting students pass the Final BDS examinations at the first sitting. This occurred in Cardiff in June 2016 and the gloves were subsequently presented to Professor Mike Lewis at the Graduation Ball on 15 July. The white gloves will be framed and put in the Dean's office to mark this success.

Interestingly, the students in the year of 2016 were the first cohort of students who five years previously had undertaken the multiple mini interviews (MMIs) format of student selection for the BDS programme. Whether or not the 100% pass rate reflects the benefits of the use of MMIs in student selection remains to be seen in future years.

