



DENTAL STUDENT

SUPPORT FOR DENTAL STUDENTS SINCE 1991

RECORDING YOUR WAY OUT OF TROUBLE WHY IS NOTE-KEEPING SO IMPORTANT?



THIS ISSUE

ADSA PRESIDENT REPORT
A ROUND-UP OF 2018

SCHOOL REPORT UPDATES
IT'S BEEN A BUSY TERM

YOUNG DENTIST CONFERENCE
READ OUR SUMMARY OF
THE EVENT

CONTENTS

02 ADSA PRESIDENT REPORT

04 SCHOOL REPORTS

08 YOUR ETHICAL COMPASS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

09 YDC 2018

10 IF YOU HAVE THE HEART TO VOLUNTEER, GO FOR IT

12 RECORDING YOUR WAY OUT OF TROUBLE

13 PLAYING THE NUMBERS GAME

14 HELPING HAND: THE VALUE OF MENTORING

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HELLO FROM DENTAL PROTECTION

Hello readers! Kara here, Dental Protection's business development executive and your dental school representative. I have plenty to update you on since our last edition, as my schedule has been full-on in 2018. I have been flying all over the country for a range of events and reflecting on the many uni engagements I've had: it really signifies our commitment to supporting each of the dental schools by offering continued advice and encouragement.

Congratulations to the many graduates of December 2017 who have now settled into working life. Dental Protection hosted end of year events with the graduating classes and provided the Class of 2017 with some mementos, including our ever-popular yearbook.

Once the summer break was over, I was back on the road promoting our student membership package to lots of keen new arrivals. February and March were action-packed in particular as students started their first semester for 2018, and I attended O Week events across the country. I had a fun time going out to the universities for fresher events and want to say a special thanks to James Cook University, the University of Adelaide, Griffith University, Charles Sturt University, La Trobe University, the University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney for such a warm welcome. I am so happy that our "Dentist in Training" mugs and other goodies were such a hit with

ADSA PRESIDENT REPORT

How's the year been so far? One thing that I found out pretty quickly is that dental school isn't easy, and with every new year comes trials and tribulations. Which is why we at ADSA, as well as organisations such as Dental Protection, are determined to make your dental student journey just that little bit easier.

2018 has truly been a year of innovation and change for ADSA. From the get-go, our committee has been challenging the status quo, generating new ideas and innovatively building upon old ones.

O-WEEK

- ✓ From the tireless work ethic of the ADSA university representatives, we were able to manage a record number of sign-ups for 2018.
- ✓ This year ADSA launched its first-ever separate Oral Health First Year Booklet, to better cater to the needs of oral health student members.



all the newbies. Now that we're halfway through the year, I hope all the first year students are beginning to feel at home and are making the most of their time at dental school.

It was nice to see so many students at ADX18 in Sydney back in March. It was a great opportunity to catch up and answer any burning questions. The team and I were also excited to have so many fourth and fifth year students at our Young Dentist Conference in May. I trust you enjoyed YDC as much as we did: more on this on page 9! I also had a nice time at the University of Queensland's bowling event on 19 May, which saw dental students take on staff in heated competition! I am always pleased to be able to sponsor these types of events and look forward to seeing you again soon.

Finally, thanks to everybody who has contributed to this publication. Our 18th edition of Dental Student Australia is once again another fantastic read, with heaps of great articles and photos!

COVER FOR VOLUNTEER WORK

Did you know cover for overseas volunteer work is one of the benefits of student membership with Dental Protection? We have members in over 70 countries around the world so if you have arranged a volunteering trip in one of these locations, then we've got you covered*. Please get in touch with us before you travel so we can help organise your dental indemnity well in advance.

**subject to the terms and conditions of the policy and underwriting approval*

KEEP IN TOUCH ON FACEBOOK

Not yet our friend on Facebook? Find the Dental Protection Australia page today to see the latest news on upcoming events, topical articles and student competitions, and to check out our recent photos. It's a great way to stay connected and learn more about what Dental Protection has to offer.

CONTACT DETAILS

We know some of you move around a lot, so please remember to keep us informed of any changes to your contact details. To continue to receive this publication in the mail and other updates from Dental Protection, it is important to provide us with your current postal address. Call us on 1800 444 542 or email us at membership@dpla.com.au to let us know.



ADSA TALKS

- ✓ I hope you all enjoyed our first ADSA talk of the year, graciously delivered by Dr Chee Chang on the mysterious topic of prosthodontics. If you missed it, make sure you keep an eye on your emails so that you can tune into our next ADSA Talks event!

ADSA CUP

- ✓ The ADSA Cup is a new initiative that ADSA has launched this year with the aim of getting the competitive juices flowing between the universities. It is a chance for the universities with the worst case of ADSA fever to win some awesome prizes.

CONVENTION

The ADSA National Convention is the next big event on our calendar, and I hope you have your ticket. As ADSA's flagship event, the convention acts to promote the exchange of ideas and philosophies between students of different dental schools, with the intention of seeding unity among a health profession. With hundreds of your student peers converging in Perth for the week-long convention, we will have a diverse academic and social program waiting for you!

All-in-all, 2018 is turning out to be an absolutely massive year for ADSA, and I can only hope that what we do has a positive impact in shaping the dental professionals of tomorrow. I wish you all the best of luck with your studies and future careers, and please make sure you look after yourselves and each other.

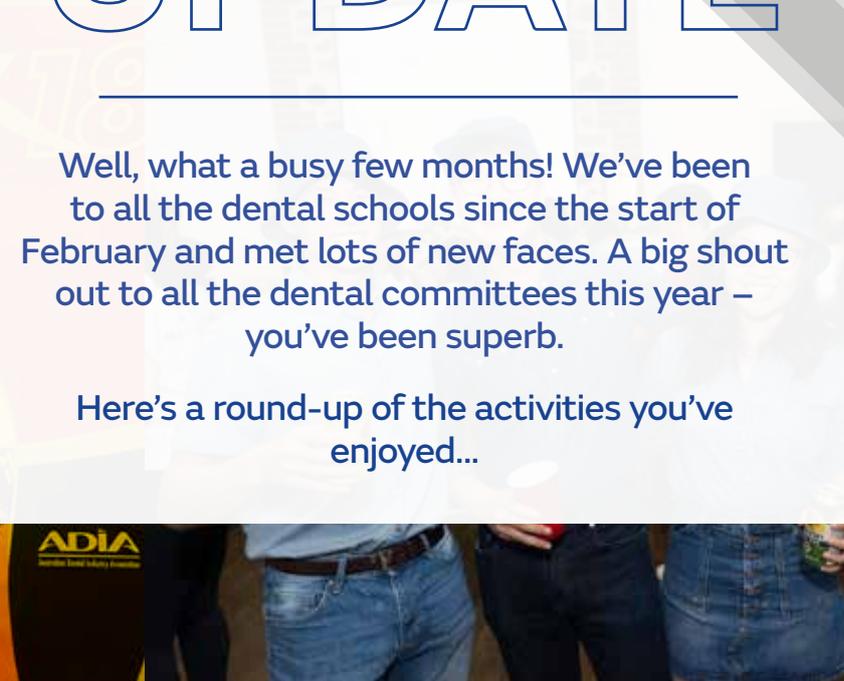
Work smart, stay positive and keep it up!



SCHOOL REPORTS UPDATE

Well, what a busy few months! We've been to all the dental schools since the start of February and met lots of new faces. A big shout out to all the dental committees this year – you've been superb.

Here's a round-up of the activities you've enjoyed...



A

The University of Adelaide

At the University of Adelaide, the year kicked off with O-week stalls in our new hospital and a freshers BBQ to welcome our new dental students to their home for the next five years.

The first years were introduced to seniors during our Buddy Day, to help them settle in well and receive tips on making the dentistry journey an enjoyable one. To foster a sense of close community, students from across all years gathered together at Victor Harbor for the hotly anticipated Annual Dental Camp, a weekend filled with educational workshops, dental related games and social activities.

Outside learning about dentistry, our students like to serve the community and were involved in the Sixth Annual Student Sleep Out, a fundraising event for the Community Outreach Dental Program (CODP). The CODP at the School of Dentistry is a program in which pro-bono dental care and treatment is provided to marginalised and vulnerable people within the community. In addition to finding sponsors, participants personally experienced what it might be like to sleep on the streets for a night, as well as helping out with food service and more.

Apart from the Sleep Out, May was filled with events such as the Marvel-inspired pub crawl "Guardians of the Cavity" and the inter-year volleyball, to allow students to have a good time before burying their heads in books to prepare for exams.

Katherine Fang
Year 3



C

CSU

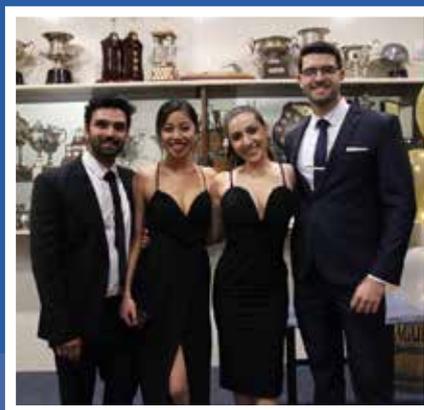
Charles Sturt University's second term was packed with an array of fun and interesting events, from social to sporting.

The beginning of May kicked off with Res Wedding, which included a 'proposal week', where students filmed themselves 'proposing' to each other. The funniest and most creative video, determined by an online poll, decided which couple would win the honour of being 'wed' to each other. The couples who did not win then made up the bridal party, and helped to organise a hen's night and buck's party, which were attended by a large number of students.

The following event was the Roland Bryant Cup (RBC), a competitive sporting event between the dental students of Charles Sturt and Sydney Universities. This year's RBC was held at The University of Sydney and included touch football, netball, dodgeball, soccer and basketball. Congratulations to USyd on their win, we look forward to next year's competition!

At the end of May, the CSU Creative Arts Club hosted an art and trivia night, where students from varying courses, including dentistry, competed in several rounds of trivia for amazing prizes. Between rounds, students were encouraged to view the art pieces on display, which had been created and submitted by fellow students. Satisfied with the wide array of social and sporting events they attended, at the end of term students got down to work and tackled their mid-year exams, to hopefully produce amazing results before deservedly enjoying their mid-year break.

Rojina Torabinejad
Year 2



G

Griffith

Hello from the Gold Coast, Queensland! While Griffith University was preparing to host and accommodate athletes for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, the School of Dentistry and Oral Health and the Griffith University Dental Students Association (GUDSA) also held plenty of events across all year levels! The year kicked off with the First Years' Orientation Day, with various companies advertising their products at the annual trade show. It was a busy day full of social activities, including tours around Griffith Dental Clinic and laboratories around the campus, and orientation lectures to assist the students to commence their journeys into the world of dentistry.

In early March, GUDSA hosted a successful "coat crawl", a pub crawl in dental coats touring around a selection of the coast's famous nightclubs, bars and nightlife. The "meet and greet" event gave the incoming first years an opportunity to meet and network with current students. This was followed by GUDSA's academic committee hosting various workshops and academic lecturers, including a Tooth ID workshop and a very useful "How to Survive 2nd Year" seminar. This helped the first and second years prepare for their laboratories and clinical simulation labs.

The ever-so-creative design team also redesigned our famous GUDSA hoodies, making them look on-point as ever! During the holidays, whilst many of the students were catching up on lectures (and much-needed sleep), staff and students from Griffith University School of Dentistry and Oral Health were volunteering at the Commonwealth Games or enjoying the sunshine the coast had to offer!

We also had our first ever GUDSA "dent camp" in May, volleyball and tennis events organised by our sporting committee and, more importantly, our Annual Dental Ball!

Chrisnan Fernando
Year 2



J

JCU

James Cook University kick-started this year with an incredible orientation week, welcoming the incoming first year cohort. The week included a social ice-breaker event held at the local lodge residence, an 'amazing race (dentistry edition)' to explore the city of Cairns, and an exciting pub crawl to end the week. A weekend day trip was also organised to Green Island, showcasing one of Cairns' popular destinations, filled with wildlife and the Barrier Reef.

At the end of February, JCU Dentistry organised a bake sale, with all proceeds and donations going to the non-profit organisation, Heart Research Australia. Students wore red and made donations to support the good cause, to help further important ongoing research.

This year we introduced a new event, a sports carnival, to promote friendly competition and interaction between the different year levels. Each year level was assigned a specific colour referencing a dental condition or term, such as white for white spot lesions. Despite the rainy weather, we were able to organise exciting sports matches for basketball, netball, soccer and touch-footy indoors. Year 2 dentistry came out on top and became the champions of the first ever JCU Dentistry Sports Carnival!

The JCU Dental Student Association also held their biannual trivia night at Bluewater Bar and Grill, for dental students to take a break from all the studying amid the busy semester. We had many raffles and prizes for different teams, as well as finger food to fuel the hard-working, hungry JCU dental students. A wide array of topics was covered, ranging from pop culture to music to 'the price is right'. Who knew a French toast half-eaten by Justin Timberlake could sell for \$1,500!

These are just some of the events held so far in the year by JCU Dentistry, with many more to come for 2018!

Ryan Wong
Year 2



L

La Trobe

Bendigo Oral Health and Dentistry Society (BOHDS) at La Trobe University kicked off the year with the annual pool party, welcoming the new first years with snags and some groovy tunes by the pool. It was the perfect opportunity for different year levels to mingle and for the committee to showcase what the society had in store for the year.

In week 3, BOHDS camp was hosted at Camp Curumbene in Corop, a one-hour drive from the campus. We had planned outdoor activities such as canoeing, raft building and a ropes course, as well as a 'back to school' themed party. Overall, it was a great weekend of socialising and fun, where many special memories were made!

BOHDS week was another major event: various activities were held throughout the week, including a pub crawl (theme: pub golf), arcade games, trivia and more. The semester then ended with a bang with the annual BOHDS Ball in May, which was the most highly anticipated event of the year!

With the annual Dental Sports Victoria Cup against Melbourne Uni Dental School coming up in August, La Trobe has been busy holding trials and training sessions for the various sports, including basketball, netball, ultimate frisbee and soccer! It will certainly be an event to look forward to and hopefully we can take home the cup this time. Go La Trobe!

Raveena Mapa
Year 2



M

The University of Melbourne

The exciting year started with a pub crawl at different bars around the university. This event has always been a great opportunity for the new students to meet the senior years, and this year was no different. Networks were further strengthened during the annual Dent Camp in Anglesea.

The weather was kind to us this year, and everyone truly enjoyed activities such as the famous tug of war and human pyramid. The fun continued into the campsite with more activities and delicious food that volunteer students had prepared.

At the beginning of March, the Melbourne Dental Students' Society (MDSS) hosted a Loupes Convention, where several companies showcased their products. Students had the chance to test a variety of loupes from different companies and gained advice before deciding which one was best for them.

For World Oral Health Day, the MDSS hosted a charcuterie for the students with a gold coin donation on entry. To promote good oral health, the committee served cheese platters, celery and carrot sticks with dips, which the students (and their teeth!) enjoyed. Overall, the MDSS raised a total of \$3,004, which included the profits of our second-hand instrument sale at the start of the year. All of the proceeds were donated to the Australian Dental Health Foundation (ADHF).

The most recent event was a boat cruise, which was probably the biggest one so far! The turnout was so successful that we even had visitors from other universities. There was also a trivia night, which is always a chance for the students to showcase their knowledge outside dentistry. The rest of the year is looking bright and we're definitely looking forward to what's to come!

Thea Pabustan
Year 3



Q

The University of Queensland

The start of dentistry 2018 was ushered in with a meet and greet, which was almost ruined by heavy storms but turned out to be a success thanks to the defiant students, who found their inner Queenslander and decided that they weren't scared of a little water.

The next event was the pre-Y2K themed boat cruise, which took us on a picturesque journey along the Brisbane River. Some notable costumes included the Super Mario Bros, a massive group of Flintstones and denim; a lot of denim!

Board games night returned after its successful debut last year, this time with more games and more pizza!

This year has so far brought some new and exciting events, such as the Beach Day Out and Open Mic Night. These events gave students an opportunity to de-stress, by letting it all out under the sun or through a microphone in a rare evening event held at our café.

The UQDSA committee has been doing a fantastic job in ensuring that everyone is getting the best dental student experience. It's been inspiring to see how much care and effort goes into the events, so big ups to them!

Calvin Kim
Year 4



S

The University of Sydney

The Sydney University Dental Association (SUDA) kicked off the year welcoming first years at Dent Camp. The fun-packed weekend in February was held at Blue Lagoon Beach Resort, and consisted of Harry Potter-themed games and activities, a mentoring session with upper years, and lots of beach time.

First years got to know their peers and future colleagues, and began the year on a positive note. In March, students got a taste of the Roaring Twenties at SUDA's Great Gatsby Night, the annual themed event. Traditionally held as a boat cruise, this new change to SUDA's events calendar was a success, bringing more than 90 students together for a night of jazz, flapper dresses, and roulette (no real money was gambled away).

This was followed closely by ADX18 Sydney. Students had the opportunity to connect with people in the dental industry, learn more about different products and companies and, most importantly, pick up freebies! To finish off long days of walking and browsing through the various booths, students wound down at ADSA's cocktail evening with light refreshments.

The most recent event was the Roland Bryant Cup which was hosted in Sydney this year. We went head-to-head against Charles Stuart University (CSU) dental students at various sports, including soccer, basketball, touch football and netball. After nine long years USyd have taken the Roland Bryant Cup for the first time in history!! And with a 5-0 sweep!!

Priyangkha Alegesam
Year 2



W

The University of Western Australia

Prime and Bond, the first social event of the 2018 UDSS social calendar, had a fantastic turnout from all DMD students from all age groups.

We also held a sports day, which entailed a series of lawn bowls tournaments and plenty of opportunities to relax and unwind as the semester got busier.

The UDSS education team hosts a Journal Club session roughly each month, which is run by specialist registrars to broaden and complement the students' knowledge. So far in 2018, we have learnt about oral mucosal disease and oral surgery for the general dentist through two informative papers.

UDSS was also asked to run a workshop to promote careers in dentistry as part of Scitech's Future Doctors' Programme for years 10-12, so we put together a seminar to delve into the evolution of dentistry and its 13 specialties. We concluded the session with a plaque disclosure practical to engage the students in the practical components of the profession, and emphasised the importance of preventative dentistry.

After a busy March full of examinations, the UDSS celebrated the coming of the mid-semester break with its Easter Brunch.

Finally, the preparation for the 2018 ADSA Convention in Perth is well underway. The UWA Dental School is very excited to be hosting the event for the first time in a decade, and there's much anticipation and excitement in the lead up to the event.

Emma Turner
DMD2
UWA ADSA Rep and Convenor





YOUR ETHICAL COMPASS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Social media has become part of our everyday life. Dr Annalene Weston, dentolegal adviser at Dental Protection, explores some of the pitfalls for dental practitioners, as modern communication methods bring with them modern risks.

According to the 2017 Sensis Social Media Report, 79% of Australians now use social media.¹ At inception, social media was essentially a passive medium, mainly used to stay in touch with friends and family. Increasingly, however, it is being used more purposefully; to stay abreast of public affairs, to promote ourselves, to advertise and to seek jobs, and as an avenue to share knowledge. But in this world of 'fake news' and 'FOMO' ('fear of missing out'), how can we be sure that the information we are acquiring is valid?

Of equal concern is the way that many dental practitioners are choosing to interact on social media platforms. Naturally, we are all entitled to our opinion; it is the representation of this opinion that can be troubling. Some social media feeds in closed groups have become gladiatorial type contests, where opinion leaders whip their followers up into a frenzy that would leave blood on the floor if in an actual, rather than chat, room. Enthusiastic onlookers eat their popcorn from the sidelines, interjecting with well-timed quips to ensure the spar runs as full a course as possible, for maximum entertainment.

Why is this a concern for healthcare professionals? And why does it matter? Can we not express ourselves as we wish on social media? Why should we have to hold back and censor ourselves?

If we can for the moment agree that the exchange of information on social media is best not enacted as a blood sport, let's consider the value of these exchanges versus the potential detriment to our professional and personal reputation.

THE PROS

Robust communication challenges our perspective and encourages growth. The ability to exchange knowledge and explore fresh ideas and concepts can only serve to underpin this development. Forums break down the rigid geographical practice boundaries of the past, and serve to dissolve the professional isolation that has hampered so many dental practitioners over the years.

THE CONS

Regardless of how you may fall in standing in the eyes of your peers for involvement in a public brawl, the key detractor here is that our regulator holds a dim view of spruiking for commercial gain. And an even dimmer view of inappropriate collegiate interactions. Especially public ones.

Screenshots from social media feeds from closed, secret and private groups often make their way to the regulator by circuitous routes, and result in the investigation of some or all of the posters. And if the codes, regulations, guidelines and standards by which we agree to abide are found to have been breached, there will be consequences.

The benefits of social media far outweigh the detriments. It is ultimately down to the individual how they choose to present themselves: but you must be prepared to reap the consequences, personally and professionally.



REFERENCES

1. www.sensis.com.au/about/our-reports/sensis-social-media-report

YOUNG DENTIST CONFERENCE 2018

We ran our seventh annual Young Dentist Conference on 12 May, and it was another successful Dental Protection event. This year's speakers offered advice, inspiration and tips in their various fields.

Some of the topics were immediately useful to attending graduates, such as Dr Margot Anderson's presentation on "Endodontics at the coalface". Delegates were also given insight from Dr Derek Mahony on sleep apnoea, and learned how dental practitioners are in an excellent position to screen for obstructive sleep apnoea.

We also understand that young dental graduates are looking to develop into well-rounded practitioners, so we had talks that also focused on patient care and communication. Dr Raj Rattan looked at the driving factors when it comes to achieving success in dentistry and how to make the most of opportunity. Dr Mike Rutherford, one of our dentolegal advisers, talked attendees through the art of making an apology.

Dr Mohit Tolani looked at the pros and cons of working in private vs public practice, while Dr Sahil Soni's presentation walked us through his journey so far and the lessons he has learned, including some very useful cases from his personal experiences. Associate Professor Mark Doepel also presented an exciting lecture on why you never want to spend time with a lawyer, with some examples of dealing with a request for patient records, all the way to civil and criminal litigation.

Following the lectures, we announced the winner of our fourth annual Young Dentist Award, with prize money of \$1,500. Congratulations again to Dr Joy Chen for her winning article on volunteering, which you can read on the next page. Once the conference closed, attendees made their way to the networking social in the Marble Foyer where they enjoyed drinks, canapes and a chance to mingle with colleagues from all over Australia.





**IF YOU HAVE THE HEART TO VOLUNTEER,
GO FOR IT**

By **Dr Joy Chen** Young Dentist Award winner at the YDC 2018

Dental volunteering is a worthwhile and rewarding experience. Within our profession, we are blessed to have the pathways to reach out and directly help others. Many dentists and students offer their time and skills to improve the quality of life of people, whether it be abroad or within our local communities.

At the risk of sounding clichéd, the two weeks I spent in Cambodia providing dental relief was eye-opening and heavily impacted my view of oral healthcare. If the idea of volunteering overseas interests you, I would highly encourage you to research and enquire into it. There are many organisations operating in a multitude of destinations around the world, and the variety and associated costs could be overwhelming.

As a start, consider the motivations behind why dental volunteering appeals to you. Perhaps you want to experience something new and step outside your comfort zone. Perhaps you want to utilise your abilities to assist others in less opportune circumstances. Perhaps you want to challenge yourself by working in a profoundly unfamiliar environment. Once you identify the reasons, consider other factors to narrow down your choices; such as length of time, costs, location, dental facilities and equipment, and whether the vision of the organisation aligns with yours. Finally, seek the personal experiences of colleagues or mentors who have been there, to gain a more realistic insight.

BE PREPARED

Once your trip is booked, make appropriate preparations before you jump on the plane. Check that your professional indemnity covers overseas dental volunteer work, and also arrange for travel insurance. It is vital to plan ahead and visit your GP to update routine and travel vaccinations for infectious diseases, and to understand the local risks. For example, Cambodia has a high prevalence of contracting hepatitis A and typhoid through contaminated food or water, malaria from mosquito bites, and HIV through body fluid exchange.

I received vaccinations at least two weeks prior to travel in order to produce protective antibody levels, and also took local measures such as bringing hand sanitiser, being careful about food sources, and regular application of insect repellent. Additionally, consider bringing your own PPE, such as surgical masks with adequate filtration efficiencies and gloves in your size. However, despite the many precautions taken, dentistry as a profession poses inherent risks whether working in Australia or overseas. Hence, we must have awareness of infection

control and always take caution to prevent sharps injuries.

Mentally prepare yourself. Seeing images of poverty in the media and looking poverty in the eye are profoundly different. We learnt this the hard way when told by local non-profit organisation staff that refusing begging children was more 'ethical' in the big picture of breaking the cycle. The after-effects of the genocide that had occurred around 40 years ago were still an open wound among the people, and the disparity between rich and poor was alarming.

The surroundings were highly vivid as new sights, smells and sounds permeated my senses. During my time in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's busy capital, in the morning my friends and I would walk in the unwavering, humid heat through a labyrinth of narrow, unnamed dirt streets. We passed by roadside vendors selling cooked bird skewers, an eclectic mishmash of shops – many selling repackaged fizzy drinks costing less than potable water. We crossed roads without pedestrian signs, weaving through a mosaic of dusty trucks, sleek cars, four family members balanced on a single moped, and aggressive tuk-tuk drivers honking their way through traffic.

IN CLINIC

Finally arriving at the dental clinic was a tiring feat, yet the day had not even started! Most of the dental aid offered in Cambodia is aimed at assisting disabled, disadvantaged and orphaned children. It was a confronting scene when a group of children arrived one morning, jumping down from the minibus to form a line outside the clinic, each holding their paper treatment record circled at the top with a large plus sign. It was a shock to learn that this excitable and energetic group came from a special institution for HIV-positive children, segregated from the rest of society.

The paranoia of an accidental sharps injury was juxtaposed with the injustice for the children born into these circumstances; these conflicted feelings have left a deep impression on me. Gaining consent through translation by the local dental assistants, most of the children were surprisingly well behaved and brave in the dental chair, and at the end of the day the work was tough yet rewarding. The feelings of helplessness, that the work we did seemed futile in comparison to the overwhelming extent of dental disease, were alleviated after seeing immediate relief of pain and restoring the smiles on their faces.

I spent my second week at a different local NGO organisation in Sihanoukville, a coastal town five hours' drive out of the

capital. Meeting the founder behind the organisation was inspiring; their mission encompassed wide-reaching provision of access to general healthcare, education, and employable skills to enable the children's development. Dental treatment fit into this framework like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle, as the direct relationship between improving dental health, appetite, overall wellbeing and growth was made apparent.



Sometimes dentistry can start to restrict our field of vision as we stare into mouths all day

We were taught the importance of upstream intervention in public health at university; however, it did not hit home until seeing the direct impact on these children. Oral health education on changing lifestyle habits, diet, and oral hygiene instructions became as equally important as operative dental treatment. Despite the language barriers, we were able to communicate through actions like playing charades and speaking basic Khmer ("hello/sous-dey", counting from one to five). This experience has changed the way I interact with children here, and also taught me to take time to educate, demonstrate correct brushing techniques, and emphasise preventative care to my adult patients.

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

Sometimes dentistry can start to restrict our field of vision as we stare into mouths all day, focusing on a single tooth, or even locating an elusive root canal. We can start to lose sight of the bigger picture in the daily grind of work. Overseas volunteer work is not a form of escape from a repetitive lifestyle, but it could change your perspective through immersion in a new environment.

You'll never know what experiences you'll encounter. The impact you may make on others could equally impact you. If you're thinking about it, whether you are an experienced clinician or just starting out as an adventurous student, just go for it.

CASE STUDY

RECORDING YOUR WAY OUT OF TROUBLE

By Dr L

I've always kept good notes. We had a great lecturer at dental school who made sure we wrote everything down all the time, so I feel I got into good habits early.

The problem came after I graduated, as I always seemed to be running late. I asked for more time for my appointments, but I didn't get it, so I started writing my records up at lunchtime or at the end of the day.

I didn't think this would affect the detail of what I wrote, but I was wrong.

A patient came in for a check-up, there was nothing on their medical history, and they hadn't been to the dentist for seven years. I did the exam, and everything looked OK. I took some x-rays and there were fluoride bombs on the back teeth. I showed the patient the x-rays and tried to explain what was going on; that the holes were deep and he may need root canal treatment if the nerves of the teeth were affected. I don't think he really believed me, as he kept saying he didn't have any pain. I gave him an estimate, and he booked to have the fillings for the next week.

I put the block in, and opened the teeth up. The cavities were huge and the patient started to feel pain as I removed the soft decay, so I put in another two blocks and a long buccal – three carpules of anaesthetic in total. The fillings were deep, but I didn't expose. When I sat the patient up, I told him again that the holes were deep and close to the nerves, but that I hadn't exposed the nerves. I told him he would be numb for a while and that the teeth would hurt

when the numbing wore off. I told him the teeth still might die and need a root treatment or even extraction. He listened. He nodded. He said he understood. He thanked me and he left.

I was already running about an hour late, as the extra numbing had taken some time. My next patient was for a surgical extraction, and I ran over into my lunch break. My 2pm patient was waiting when I finished.

I wrote the notes up that night. I spent a lot of time on the surgical extraction notes as it had been for a wisdom tooth and I wanted to make sure that the consent was all documented properly, and all the risks and warnings I'd given.

I wrote down what local anaesthetic I used for the fillings patient, and the materials I used, but I didn't write down what I told him. I just wrote "deep".

You know what happened next...

The patient got a toothache and complained about me. He said he didn't have toothache before he saw me and said I must have hit the nerve, and that's why he needed so much numbing. He said he had seen another dentist who told him I had filled into the nerves and damaged all three teeth. He had chosen to have the worse tooth extracted because of the pain, and wanted me to pay for an implant to replace it, and for root fillings for the other two teeth. I tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. He asked to speak with a "senior dentist" who knew what they were doing. My principal told him I had done nothing

wrong, but the patient didn't believe him, and I soon received a letter from AHPRA. Worst day of my life. So I called Dental Protection.

DR ANNALENE WESTON – DENTOLEGAL ADVISER FOR DENTAL PROTECTION

Dr L is one of many practitioners who receive a complaint from AHPRA annually, with dental practitioners currently being the second most complained about profession by percentage. Dr L was asked to provide her records and x-rays and a full summary of what had happened. Her treatment planning was sound, and the decisions she made were good. Sadly, her records let her down as they did not reflect the conversations she had had with the patient and, critically, what risks and warnings she had issued. Dr L showed great insight in her submission to AHPRA by candidly discussing the deficiencies in her record keeping.

AHPRA were fair with Dr L, and on consideration of the fact she was a recent graduate, they proceeded to caution her only (the lowest level of action they can take) and recommended that she undertake some record keeping CPD, which she has.

PLAYING THE NUMBERS GAME

By **Dr N, Sydney**

I have always wanted to be my own boss, so I set up my own practice straight from dental school.

Employing staff was a lot harder than I thought, but I ended up with a mix of experienced staff and new people keen to learn. My practice manager was a great find. She was local, knew everyone and had recently left a practice when it was sold. She said she had the experience to help me build my practice. She seemed really nice, and the phone started ringing with patients as soon as she started.

I had prepared myself for a slow start, but I was busy straight away. I like making partial dentures and doing crowns, and I was happy with my business growth as I was doing a lot of prosthodontic work. I felt that patients were probably coming to me because I was cheap, but I hoped that with proven good quality work, I could grow by referral and see fewer people but charge more.

The pace continued, and I began to rely on my staff more and more to do their job without being overseen. I began to work two surgeries simultaneously.

Then I received a health fund audit. I thought this was just routine and sent the patient records as requested. I didn't check who they were. I didn't check their HICAPS receipts. I didn't think about it again; I was too busy.

Out of the blue, I received a letter advising me that the health fund had suspended my provider privileges – this meant that any patient who had health insurance from them would not be able to get a rebate if they saw me, AND they were going to write to every patient I had seen and tell them so. The letter also said that I needed to pay back a huge amount of money for incorrect billing.

I contacted Dental Protection and they talked me through what to do. I got the patient records and compared them with the health fund records – they didn't match. For example, if I had done a crown

for 26, the patient had paid not for a crown on 26, but for five fillings instead – same money to me, less out of pocket for the patient, and one very unhappy health fund.

I spoke to my practice manager to get an explanation. I thought she would be upset or apologetic, but she wasn't. She said it was 'standard practice'. She said that she was a 'practice builder', and that she was trying to help me. She said that the patients expected we do this. I knew that I could no longer trust her, so I asked her to leave. She threatened to destroy my business by bad mouthing me but it didn't matter; I felt she had already destroyed it through dishonesty.

I couldn't believe that Dental Protection would help me with this, but they did. They helped me with a letter to the health fund to explain, and they accompanied me to a meeting with the health fund. As a result of this, I got my provider recognition back, but I did have to pay back an amount for the dodgy billing. That was tough, particularly as it wasn't me that did it, but I do understand it was billed under my provider number, and so it is my responsibility.

I now check all of the billings that go through HICAPS, because I can never, ever be in this situation again.

The dentolegal perspective

DR ANNALENE WESTON, DENTOLEGAL ADVISER FOR DENTAL PROTECTION

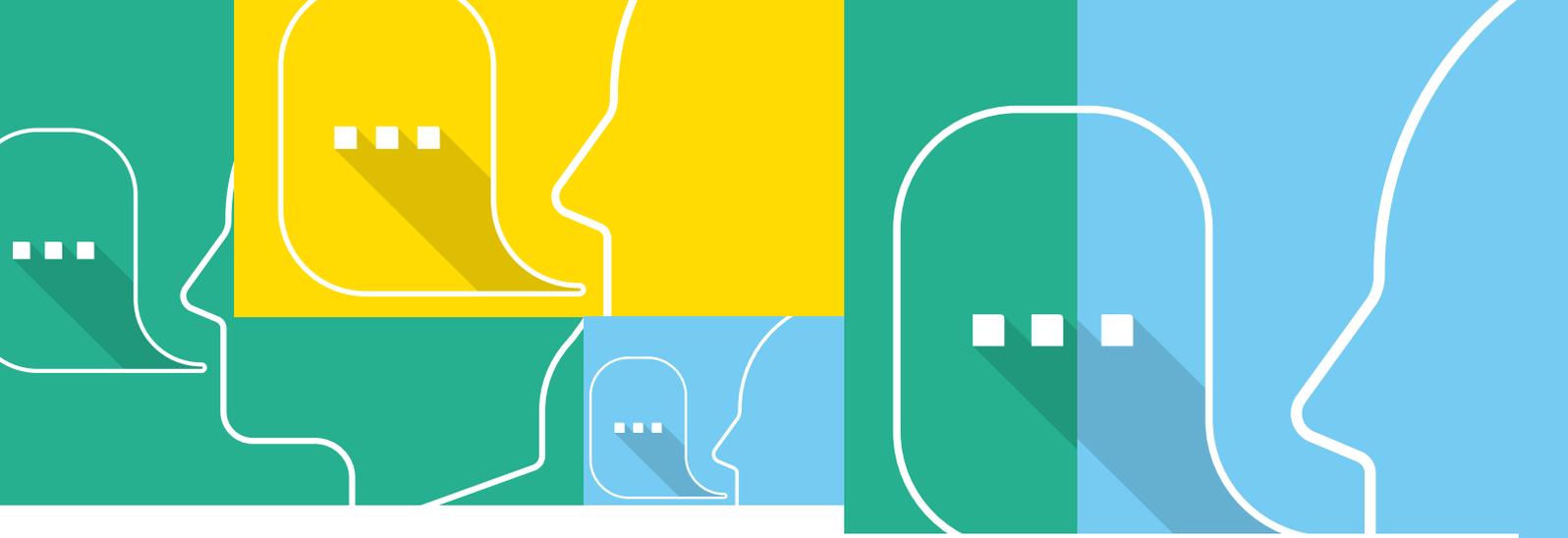
I remember this case well. Dr N was just starting out: he is an honest and genuine practitioner who was devastated to be called dishonest, scared of reputational damage, and of losing the practice he had built up. I was glad we got such a good result.

I wish I could tell you that this type of case is in isolation but, regrettably, it is not. Many practitioners have their provider number used for inappropriate billing without their knowledge and, if this is discovered, it is the provider linked to the number who is responsible for the payback, not the person who has been billing.

The best practical advice we can give is:

- **Keep an eye on your billings through front office – don't be scared to check the HICAPS receipts.**
- **Never become involved in inappropriate billing practices – patients will ask you to run a different code (or a different card) through – don't.**
- **Make sure you close a provider number when you leave a practice.**





A HELPING HAND: THE VALUE OF MENTORING

Those first steps into the professional workforce are daunting for any dental graduate. Dr Mohit Tolani says that finding a mentor can be a big help

Dental graduates in Australia emerge from a four-year postgraduate or five-year undergraduate education program to enter the professional healthcare workforce. During the final year of university, imminent graduates always seem to be contemplating the ‘mentoring aspect’ of future jobs.

I recollect many of my own classmates asking practices and hospitals if mentoring was included in any job offer. This is likely due to the fact that the transition from student to working professional has been perceived by many to be greatly challenging, with frustration, disillusionment and a lack of self-assurance.¹

Among the competition of new graduates, many tend to feel inadequate in challenging situations and time management, and when supervising support work.² When I started working, a colleague asked me if I knew what was happening in my sterilisation unit and how instruments were getting managed, as practices vary; as said by him: “Any mistake there can bounce back on you, as you are the clinician working there.”

This paved the way for me to seek ‘experts’ in the field with all the answers. The following tips are based on my

experiences in mentoring and mentor-finding in early clinical years:

- Try and source a senior dentist in the workplace who would be able to assist you with complex cases and patient management tips. Have an open and honest discussion about your strong points and areas that you find challenging: acknowledging these early on may assist both of you in provision of assistance and improvement.
- If there isn’t a senior dentist or an experienced clinician readily available, then try speaking to some dental specialists or dentists with specialist expertise, in consultation with the practice. Personally, I found this useful for discussing many complex cases and their viewpoint, especially knowing when to draw the line when it is too complex or out of my current scope of practice. I discovered that most of my local specialists were happy to assist new graduates, and also invited them to the study clubs.
- “Do not discount the power of your university teacher” – I felt that my mentors from university were very helpful. I am still in contact with some of them and obtain advice when needed.
- External mentoring programs, such as the ones run by the Australian Dental Association, are also beneficial. In my new job, where I relocated interstate within a regional area, I found this very constructive as I wanted to meet local practitioners and speak to someone to gain advice; not just work-related, but related to professional growth through their lens.

It has been stated that the transition into a new job from university involves the development of a new identity, which can require counselling and guidance.¹ Because of this, mentoring has been deemed pivotal to professional growth during the first few years of practice, and it has been suggested that mentoring should be instituted within clinical practice settings. I did find through mentoring a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.

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