



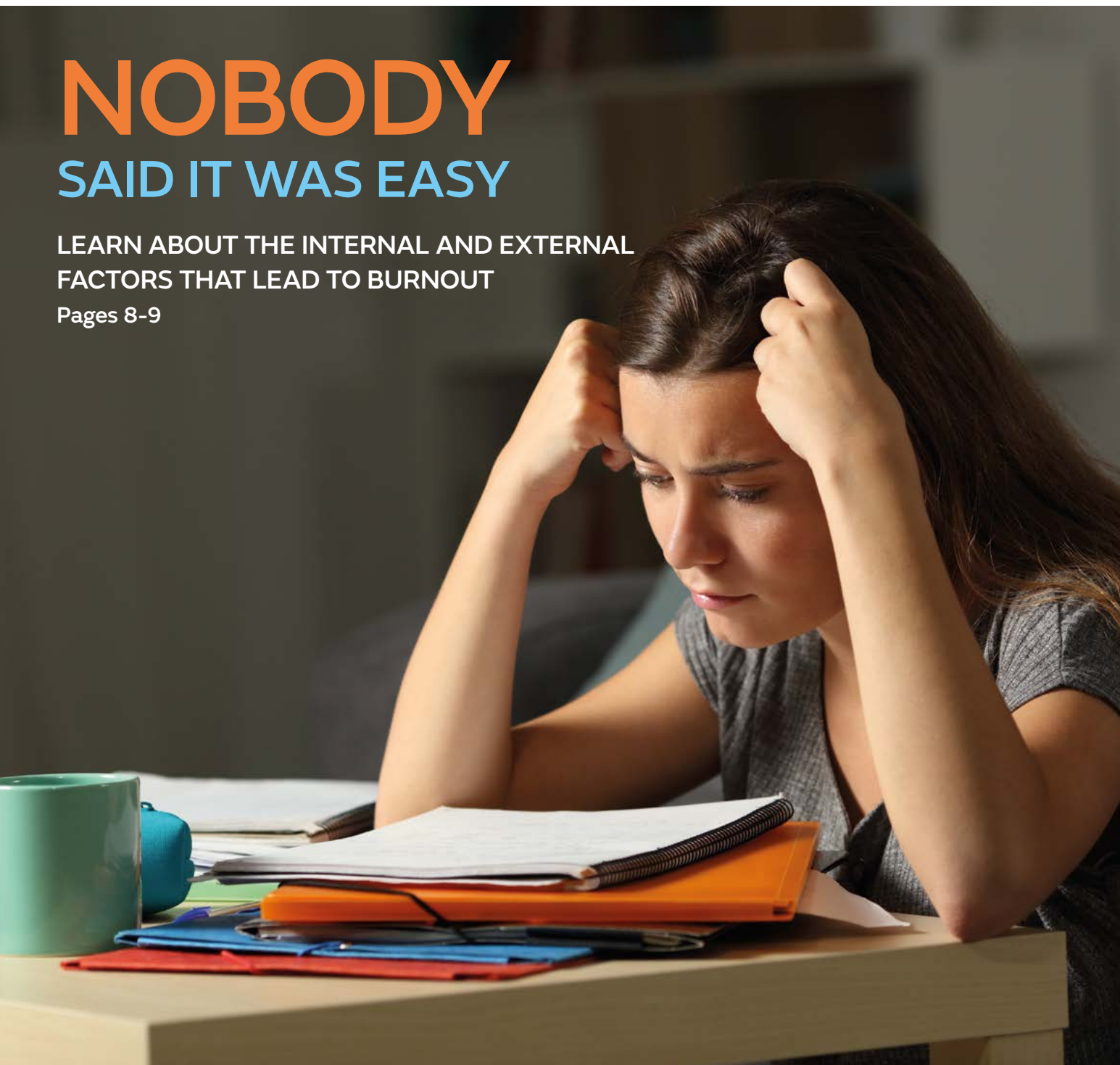
DENTAL STUDENT

SUPPORT FOR DENTAL STUDENTS SINCE 1991

NOBODY SAID IT WAS EASY

LEARN ABOUT THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
FACTORS THAT LEAD TO BURNOUT

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HELLO

FROM DENTAL PROTECTION

Hi readers! Kara here, Dental Protection's business development executive and your dental school representative. I have so much to update you on since our last edition as my schedule has been packed this year. I have been flying all around the country for a range of events and, looking back at all the university engagements I have attended, it really solidifies our commitment to supporting the dental schools by offering continued reassurance and advice.

Congratulations to the many graduates who came through in December 2018 and have now settled into working life. Dental Protection hosted end of year events with the graduating classes, and once again we were happy to offer our Class of 2018 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 eager new arrivals. I visited students starting their first semester for 2019 at O-Week events across the country. I had such a fun time going out to different universities for fresher events, so would like to say a special thanks to Griffith, JCU, CSU, La Trobe, Melbourne Uni, Adelaide Uni and Sydney Uni for making me feel so welcome. I am pleased that our giveaways were so popular with all the newbies.

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ADSA

PRESIDENT REPORT



What better way to spend my term as ADSA President than by celebrating ten years since our inception! It is set to be a busy year, with a range of new and ongoing initiatives to support and unite Australian dental students, as well as to involve them in the wider community.

Having just become a full member of the International Association of Dental Students (IADS), ADSA is excited to welcome our members to participate in volunteering and exchange programs, and to make the most of their online resources. We also have an outreach program in the works, so keep an eye out and stay tuned for volunteering opportunities with other organisations!



As we're more than halfway through the year, I hope all the first years now feel at home and are making the most of their time at university.

I was also lucky enough to attend La Trobe Uni's fifth year Back to Base Dinner on 6 June, which was a lovely evening with a great cohort.

Lastly, we were so pleased to be able to support the ADSA Convention in Adelaide; thanks to everyone who attended our lecture or visited our stand at the tradeshow. Also, great job by the ADSA Convention Organising Committee and, of course, Adelaide Uni for hosting such a memorable event.

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 more than 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.

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

GRADUATING THIS YEAR?

Check out the Survival Guide section of our website for a range of handy tips. This is a dedicated resource for young dentists, including articles, competitions and information on working abroad and volunteering.

We really appreciate the time and effort from everyone who has contributed to this publication. Our 19th edition of *Dental Student Australia* is yet again another great read with plenty of articles and photos!



ADSA Convention was the highlight of our calendar, offering students the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and hands-on clinical skills, while fostering friendships with delegates from across the country through a range of team-building, networking and social activities. What a success it was and a huge thank you to the host city of Adelaide.

ADSA Talks were a hit in the first term and we have more coming up now that Convention has been and gone. These talks are brought to you all by a range of specialists and organisations including the RACDS.

The ADSA Cup is also back in full swing, with all donations going towards the Blood Drive. ADSA membership signups and attendance at talks count towards your university's score, with generous prizes up for grabs.



SCHOOL REPORTS UPDATE

Well, what a busy first half of the year! We've been to many of 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

The Adelaide University Dental Students' Society (AUDSS) is celebrating its centennial year, ensuring that 2019 will be packed full of events! The year was off to a great start with our O-week festivities – Freshers' BBQ and Freshers' Rooftop Party. Here we welcomed our first-year dental students to their new home and second family.

First years had a chance to formally meet others at the 'Buddy Meet & Greet', where seniors imparted advice and guidance in the hopes of ensuring a smooth and enjoyable start to their dentistry journeys. Two successful bake sales were held to help support the Half-BDS and the graduation ball, with plenty of sweet and savoury delights on offer.

We saw the end of March go off with a bang with the highly anticipated Dent Camp, a weekend filled with educational workshops and leisure activities during the day, and the themes 'Ancient World Festivus' and 'Sorry Mum' for the after-dark fun.

This year, the seventh annual sleep out took place, where students were given an opportunity to rough it for a night and experience what it may be like to sleep in an overcrowded homeless shelter. This was all while raising funds for the Community Outreach Dental Programme, which provides free dental services to those who have experienced homelessness.

Finally, we hosted the event of the year – the ADSA Convention. We were excited to show off our brand-new Adelaide Dental Hospital, treat delegates to amazing talks and workshops with renowned dentists and specialists, and enjoy internationally recognised wineries at the Barossa Valley. Thanks to all who came along – we hope we showed everybody exactly how we have a good time in "Radelaide".

Mikolle Montano
Year 5



C

CSU

To kickstart the year, the Student Dental Association (SDA) held the usual 'wine mixer', which was the customary blast with free wine and food, and awesome tunes playing in the background. It was the perfect opportunity for first years to meet and socialise with older years, and for the amazing SDA committee to showcase the high standards of the events to come.

We then held our annual commencement ball, which was a hit with delicious food and great music. It was extra special as final year students who were on placement made the effort to come back and visit!

With the Roland Bryant Cup (RBC) against Sydney University coming up, CSU dentistry students were busy holding practice sessions and trials for the chosen sports including dodgeball, basketball, ultimate Frisbee and soccer. This was one of the most anticipated events of the year, as both universities are very competitive as usual. Then the big day finally arrived in May. We were so thrilled to win 3-2. Thanks to USYD for being such good sports.

As you can see, CSU's first semester was packed full of fun events. This gave students many opportunities to relax after studying so hard throughout the year, with themed bar nights held every fortnight. By the end of the term, students were ready to work hard and tackle their exams before enjoying their well-deserved mid-year break. Now we are back and look forward to enjoying semester two just as much.

Timothy Nguyen
Year 3



G

Griffith

The year kicked off with Griffith University Dental Students Association (GUDSA) hosting the first social event for the trimester: the annual ice breaker at the uni bar. The night was focused on welcoming the first years to the Griffith dental family. It was a great opportunity for all year levels to mingle with plenty of drinks, pizza and games involved.

The academic events for the year launched with the Tooth ID workshop, which helped the first years prepare for their laboratories. The event was hosted by GUDSA's academic committee, who have plenty more workshops and academic lectures organised for the rest of 2019.

Students also got to show off their talents by singing up a storm at the open mic night, which consisted of music, dancing and vocals. The night was aimed at scouting Griffith's dental talent, doubling as an audition opportunity for those vying for a main role in the Griffith Dent Revue this year.

In terms of sporting, a badminton match kickstarted the year, followed by weekly dodgeball games and the annual beach volleyball tournament where teams competed to claim the coveted 2019 volleyball championship trophy.

GUDSA also hosted a trivia night at the uni bar with plenty of pizza to go around. Teams from all year levels battled it out for prizes. Massive congratulations to Flossoraptors for their big win!

Olan Hartley
Year 2



J

JCU

At JCU, we kickstarted the year with our traditional O-Week festivities to welcome our first years. The week included an icebreaker at our student accommodation, a Cairns city scavenger hunt and our most anticipated event – the party bus!

Our student body, JCUDSA, ensures that there is a balance between work and play. Various clinical skill nights and 'lunch and learn' workshops are held throughout the year to provide extra learning opportunities. March was a busy month, with our second inter-year sports carnival following the success of the inaugural one in 2018 and promotions for the Red Cross Tertiary Blood Challenge taking place. The sports carnival is a great way to encourage friendly competition between the year levels and a chance to forget about those mid-sem blues, with the second years coming out on top to claim victory! Hopefully this will become an ongoing event for JCUDSA in the years to come.

Numerous bake sales were held by JCUDSA to raise money for non-profit organisations and give back to those who are less fortunate. Our dentistry students sure have a sweet tooth and know how to lend a helping hand to those in need! There are many events on this year such as our Med x Dent mixer and sports carnival, Relay for Life, Halloween party and our annual dentistry ball.

We are looking forward to seeing what the rest of this year brings for JCUDSA and ADSA!

Nhi Truong
Year 5



L

La Trobe

BOHDS Camp 2019 marked the start of a busy year for students at La Trobe. Camp Kookaburra welcomed BOHDS members from all year levels and provided them with the opportunity to meet new people and catch up with friends after the summer break. During the day, activity groups rotated through canoeing, raft building and a low ropes course, while also making good use of the tennis and beach volleyball courts. This was followed by a games night and a festival-themed party, guaranteeing a fantastic camp experience for all.

BOHDS week was another major event not to be missed, involving unlimited laser tag and go-karting, an outdoor sports competition, an ice cream station at our movie night and our annual pub crawl. This year, BOHDS collaborated for the first time with the Bendigo Law and Criminology Society for the pub crawl. There was a huge turnout and it was a great chance for BOHDS members to meet some new people. The theme for the night was "when I grow up..." which invited all kinds of costumes.

Semester one drew to a close with the highly anticipated BOHDS Ball. On the night, each year level premiered the short films they had been working on, highlighting their university experiences so far, triggering laughter and tears.

With our Dental Sports Victoria competition against Melbourne Uni approaching, as well as the celebration of BOHDS' tenth birthday, we cannot contain our excitement for everything semester two has in store for us.

Joanne Ling
Year 2



M

The University of Melbourne

The Melbourne Dental Students' Society (MDSS) kicked off the year with lunches to welcome dental and oral health students to their new 'home away from home'. The first big event was the pub crawl, which was the perfect opportunity for newcomers to don some scrubs and socialise with each other as well as the older students. Following this was the MDSS Orientation Camp hosted at Sokil Arts Eco Retreat. The weather was terrific for beach activities such as the human pyramid and dog and bone, and bonds were formed among new friends! Campers then boogied the night away during the disco party, which saw many decked out in fluoro, leg warmers and athleisure!

Loupes Convention was next and was a great success with a large turnout. Students were able to test different products and learn about the different kinds of loupes from several companies. This helped everyone make a decision about which loupes are best for them.

For World Oral Health Day, the MDSS set up a stall outside the Sidney Myer Asia Centre to promote good oral health to the wider community. We spoke to members of the public and distributed Colgate toothbrushes and toothpaste, coupled with ADAVB flyers, encouraging good oral hygiene practice. We were happy with how it went and the feedback was super positive!

The busy semester continued with the MDSS boat cruise, which took everyone back in time as the theme was 'Back to School', the trivia night (who doesn't love a chance to show off?), the volunteering convention, and the case presentation night, where specialist dentists showcased some interesting cases.

We worked hard for exams and now that we are back from our well-deserved holidays, we're predicting an awesome rest of the year with more fun times ahead!

Cindy Le
Year 3



Q

The University of Queensland

2019 started with a bang at the annual meet and greet, where hundreds of UQDSA members flooded the dance floors and bars all night long. The night was an absolute success for everyone who came, including the new UQDSA team who worked tirelessly to ensure that the first event of the year was a stunner. Although the bar tab fought a hard battle keeping up with the enthusiasm of the UQ dentistry students, it did not dampen anyone's spirits throughout the night.

Dodgeball was the first sports event of the year. All the stresses of adjusting to uni life and getting back into dentistry were thrown away with each ball. To top it all off, lunch was provided for the hungry athletes in the form of sushi platters, KFC and pizza for everyone!

This year UQDSA hosted their first non-alcoholic social event – the Carnival. Although the unpredictable and cheeky Queensland weather blew us off track from our original event date, it was an opportunity for everyone to get on their feet, participate in tournaments and absorb the rays of the sunshine state. Our students also had the chance to let the musical talent flow during open mic night, and ask their burning questions to our wonderful alumni during our recent Grad Panel.

With a plethora of events planned with UQDSA for the second half of the year, rest assured our members will receive the full benefits of the UQ Advantage.

William Jin
Year 4



S

The University of Sydney

As is tradition at the University of Sydney, the 2019 academic year was welcomed with our annual Dent Camp. The weekend away at Shelly Beach Holiday Park on the Central Coast was packed with activities, team bonding events and mentoring from upper years. This year's theme, 'The Olympic Games', saw teams go head-to-head in a friendly competition for glory.

The new first years got to know their peers, including some of the Sydney University Dental Association (SUDA) year representatives and other committee members, at the Dean's Welcome, beginning the year on a positive note.

In April, students showed off their costume creation skills at SUDA's Disney costume party – another unique event for SUDA. Students from all years got together to celebrate finishing the first round of exams for 2019 – the night was well deserved!

The next big event on the calendar for students was the Roland Bryant Cup, which was hosted at Charles Sturt University (CSU) in May. Students from both universities competed for university bragging rights in a number of sports, including soccer, dodgeball and ultimate Frisbee. We gave it our all but weren't the winners this time. Congratulations to CSU on your win.

The SUDA committee is also setting up a number of academic talks this year that will expand and go beyond the material taught in classes.

Parshad Sankey
Year 2



W

The University of Western Australia

The UWA UDSS has been busy since we came back in January! As always, Prime and Bond was a hit with great tunes, socialising and food. It was the perfect event to meet new friends from all years!

A very successful bake sale was held on Oral Health Day in March with funds going to the Kimberley Dental team – a not-for-profit organisation that promotes oral health to indigenous and disadvantaged children and their families in the Kimberley region of WA.

The UDSS education team has been hosting monthly journal clubs to complement the student curriculum. In April we had the privilege of learning about spacing in the primary dentition from the paediatric specialist registrars.

After a nice relaxing April break, students were able to come back to enjoy a gorgeous afternoon in the renowned Swan Valley at the *Pinot, Drafts 'n' Lunch Swan Valley Wine Tour*. It was the perfect event to prepare students for the remainder of the semester.

Dental and medical students formed the Runny Nose Club and met weekly to train for the HBF Run, which was held in May. Well done to everyone involved, as it is a very exciting initiative to support a healthy lifestyle whilst fundraising for a great cause.

We are now well rested after the mid-year break and happy to get back into the swing of things here at UDSS.

Colleen Westerman
Year 2



NOBODY SAID IT WAS EASY

In the last month, at least once, concern or worry for a patient, colleague or my place of work has crept into my mind outside my working hours, potentially disrupting my sleep or my home life. *Dr Annalene Weston*, dentolegal adviser at Dental Protection, asks if this has also happened to you

Regretfully, it is highly likely that it has, as this type of anxiety is commonplace and affects more dental practitioners than you would perhaps suspect. This way of thinking is also a precursor to burnout, which has the alarming global incidence of over 50% of dental practitioners at any one time.

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

Let's start with what it is not. It is not a sign of weakness, nor evidence that you are 'less' than others. It is not a sign that you are 'not cut out for dentistry' nor is it evidentiary of a need to 'harden up'. There are many definitions of burnout, and one we believe best describes burnout in dental practitioners is:

*"Burnout occurs when passionate, committed people become deeply disillusioned with a job or career from which they have previously derived much of their identity and meaning. It comes as the things that inspire passion and enthusiasm are stripped away, and tedious or unpleasant things crowd in."*¹

TAKE ME BACK TO THE START

It begins at dental school. To even get there we first have to engage our Type A tendencies into overdrive, and strive to hit the top. Top of our class, the leader of knowledge, become an expert in all things.

Studies show that burnout and stress in dental practitioners begins at dental school, with the primary stressors identified as: concerns about manual dexterity, reduced holidays with increased difficulty of coursework, moving away from home, clinical transition and staff inconsistency.²

Naturally, as we exit dental school and progress through our careers, some of these stressors fall away, only to be replaced by fears that are equally damaging. While there is a commonality in the pressures identified across the profession as being most harmful, each country has its own unique factors, deeply rooted in the payment structure and mechanisms of that region.

It would be unsurprising to many then that the Australian specific practitioner stressors have been identified to be time and scheduling pressures, professional concerns (specifically concerns regarding complaints, audits and the regulator), patients' perceptions of dentists, staffing problems, pressure associated with treatment of patients and business process stressors.³

It is not the weight of the burden you carry, but also the length of time you carry it for that is significant. Regretfully, many of our plates are fuller than we would like. External pressures such as ailing parents, young families and even our mortgage payments sit atop our business and clinical stressors, compounding their weight and amplifying the risk of burnout to an alarming level. Having a child under the age of 21 increases your risk of burnout by 54% and, further, having a spouse who does not work as a healthcare provider is reported to increase your odds by 23%.⁴ This leaves me, the wife of an electrician and the working mother of six and eight-year-old boys, at a significant risk of burnout. Where does it leave you?





OUR OWN BIGGEST CRITIC?

When we are stretched to the max, our inner voice can unhelpfully chip in when we are at our most tired and vulnerable, psyching us out by whispering in our ear the one thing that we have secretly always feared. Perhaps it is “*I am not good enough at this*” or “*my patients and my staff are all against me*”, “*I am going to have a career ending complaint*” and even “*I can’t do this anymore*”.

STOP

The problem is real, and brushing it under the carpet will not address it, and certainly will not make it go away. It is not all bad news though – burnout is identifiable, perhaps preventable and certainly curable.

Dental Protection would never raise a practitioner problem without providing a solution. For those of you who wish to know a little more about the internal and external factors that lead to burnout, and explore the active steps you can take to gain control of this, our 2019 presentation, *Under Pressure*, is now available on Prism.



It begins at dental school. To even get there we first have to engage our Type A tendencies into overdrive, and strive to hit the top. Top of our class, the leader of knowledge, an expert in all things

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CONSENT, AND WHY IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE

Dr Philip Chien, the runner up in Dental Protection's Young Dentist Award for Professional Excellence last year, looks at consent and its complexities



As a junior dentist, one of the challenges I often face revolves around the process of consent. By ‘consent’, I am not referring to the act of the patient simply giving permission to undergo a procedure, but specifically the concept of ‘informed consent’.

Informed consent is inherently complex in its nature – it consists of three essential elements: voluntarism, information disclosure and decision-making capacity.¹

Voluntarism, or volition, is the ability of someone to judge what is best for themselves without coercion. Information disclosure involves education – our patients must be educated about all the possible treatment options, including the risks and benefits of both undergoing and not undergoing a procedure, and the long-term implications of each treatment option. This information must then be reconciled to a level of understanding where the patient is able to make an appropriate decision for themselves. Not only is obtaining informed consent a good idea – it is our duty to do so. We must remember that our patients have come to seek our professional advice at a time of need, and as a result, we must impart our privileged knowledge so that they may make the best decision.

Despite its integral role in our daily practice, I do not find obtaining informed consent to be simple and easy.

Akin to our motor skills in clinical dentistry, being able to get comprehensive informed consent requires experience and practice.

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAIL

I recount a memorable example where I was discussing a rather routine endodontic procedure with a patient. Eager to demonstrate my knowledge, I began explaining the nature of the procedure: the rationale behind the treatment, the intended outcomes and the intricacies of the treatment. Eventually, I began to discuss the complications and risk of the treatment. I talked about the success rates and why it may not always be 100% successful even when done well, for instance due to the possibility of small lateral and accessory canals that may not be disinfected. I talked about potential procedural problems – notably file separations.

I talked about what may happen to the tooth afterwards – how it will become more brittle and prone to fracture, and may require a crown in future to protect the

longevity of the tooth. The more I talked, the bigger the frown on the patient’s face, and I could see her concern for the treatment option. Eventually the patient declined root canal treatment as the treatment of choice.

At a later point in time, I replayed that same interaction in my mind. I listened to myself go through the risks and complications. I tried to see it as if I was in the patient’s chair. Upon reflection, root canal treatment sounded like a terrible idea. So many things could go wrong! Why would anyone go through an expensive, long procedure that spans multiple appointments where things could go wrong?

However, things do indeed go wrong at times in dentistry. I humbly believe there would not be a clinician that would claim they’ve had a perfect streak in their career, where all their treatments have never failed and things have gone according to plan all the time.

GETTING THE BALANCE

Herein lies the complexity that I mentioned earlier. It was my duty to inform the patient of the possible things that could go wrong, and I felt I had accomplished that comprehensively. Morally, I felt I had done right by myself and by the patient. Dentolegally, I ticked all the boxes. The patient was given the information about things that may happen during and after the treatment, and I felt she had sufficient knowledge to give informed consent. Yet, the end result was scaring the patient away from treatment.

Therefore, despite all the risks a certain treatment option poses, it is also important to convey why you see value in undergoing such a procedure. The advantages and disadvantages of going through the treatment must be clearly outlined – part of the process also includes explaining if you think the benefits would outweigh the risks: and this judgement is why the patient seeks our professional opinion. What would have been the benefits of undergoing root canal treatment in that previous example? The lifespan of the tooth could have been extended with a low risk of procedural and post-operative problems.

What probably further complicates the issue is the lack of foresight I currently possess. As I am currently in my first year out of university, I am unable to say with absolute confidence what the treatment outcome would be a few years down the



Despite its integral role in our daily practice, I do not find obtaining informed consent to be simple and easy

track. For those who trained in Australia as a dental student, you rarely even get to see your patient again for a six-month review. Sure, we have the textbook knowledge of what is likely to happen, and we had lecturers that would tell us what the outcomes may be if certain treatment objectives were met, and we also have the luxury of updated research and journals to give us the most recent findings and studies. But I feel these are things we have to experience ourselves clinically to validate those findings. If I have not seen my own work five years down the track, how can I assure them that they will be fine then? How can I say that my fillings have an average lifespan of a specific number of years when I haven’t even been practising as a graduate dentist for that long? Will the informed consent still be accurate then, if I’m only predicting outcomes from others’ experiences and not my own?

For these reasons I think informed consent can be quite complex. It is an integral and critical part of clinician-patient relationships, but I believe it takes considerable experience and communication skills to convey this kind of information well. Discussing treatment procedures can be very sensitive and emotional for our patients, and we should dedicate effort to providing the most comprehensive information possible when obtaining consent, in spite of the inherent challenges.

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THE TECHNOLOGY DILEMMA

Technology surrounds us and enriches our daily lives. But where does it sit in the practice of dentistry, and is it more harmful than helpful to us (or our patients)? *Dr Annalene Weston*, dentolegal adviser at Dental Protection, explores the impact technology can have on dentolegal risk

Are you an early adopter? Generationally, you may be very comfortable with technology and quick to incorporate new modalities into your practice.

Perhaps you are fearful of technology – slow to embrace and then falling behind the accepted standard. Or maybe you suffer with FOMO (fear of missing out) and are terrified of NOT jumping on each technological bandwagon for fear of either falling behind the standards or falling behind your competitors.

It is exhausting isn't it?

How then do we assess which technology is best suited for us, and how do we safely incorporate it into our practice?

This drive to automate is not just from within our profession, but also from the outside. Society is immersed in technology, and we are becoming increasingly reliant upon it.

My watch tells me how I slept and whether I have been active enough today. It even buzzes me a reminder to tell me to move from my dental chair. My phone keeps me in constant contact with my family and friends, tells me where I am supposed to be and remembers where I parked my car.

How do these convenient technologies integrate into daily dental practice? And does an increase in the use of technology increase or decrease dentolegal risk?

INFORMAL TECHNOLOGY

Commonly, this type of technology creeps into our practice as a stopgap, to solve a problem that has arisen.

A great example of this would be using apps such as Whatsapp or Snapchat for communication between classmates, staff members in a group practice or with patients.

The dentolegal risk with informal technologies such as these is that they don't have the same security and privacy wraparounds as a formal group messaging service like Medtasker.

Naturally, all the communication had with a patient, particularly around their treatment or health, forms part of the patient's records, and if this record 'disappears after 30 seconds' how would you keep the information secure? A further issue can flow on from the inherent informality of text communications, as boundaries may inadvertently be breached, which is not viewed in a good light by the regulator.

Increasing the safety of this type of informal technology can only be achieved by replacing it with more 'health record specific' apps, which have appropriate safety and security, and are in accordance with the necessary Australian Privacy Principles.¹ It may be less convenient and clunkier to do this, but it will lead to safer practice as you will be able to easily produce the conversations that were had, as many of these apps can upload them straight to dental records.



A great example of this would be using apps such as Whatsapp or Snapchat for communication between classmates, staff members in a group practice or with patients



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FORMAL TECHNOLOGY

As fundamental proceduralists, dental practitioners have adopted and incorporated a great deal of technology into our dental practices, usually aimed at achieving a more predictable outcome for the patient or the procedure, rather than tracking or monitoring the patient's health, as might be the focus for our medical colleagues.

However, the greatest dentolegal risk of both tracking and procedural technology often comes down to operator error, or worse – too many shortcuts leading to an incomplete procedure, or misinterpretation of the dataset available. It's one thing to take a CBCT, but quite another to have the skillset to interpret the data.

STAYING AHEAD

Technological advance will continue and it will become more accepted as best practice across the disciplines of dentistry. To incorporate it safely, a practitioner could consider:

- researching what it is, what it is replacing, and why you need it – preferably from multiple sources: CPD can be key in expanding our approach to dentistry
- learning to use and understand the technology in your practice, to ensure no misinterpretation of data that could lead to mis/missed diagnosis or failed treatment
- ensuring that digital applications meet the required standards of privacy and security.

REFERENCES

1. Australian Privacy Principles Office of the Australian Information Commissioner – OAIC. oaic.gov.au

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