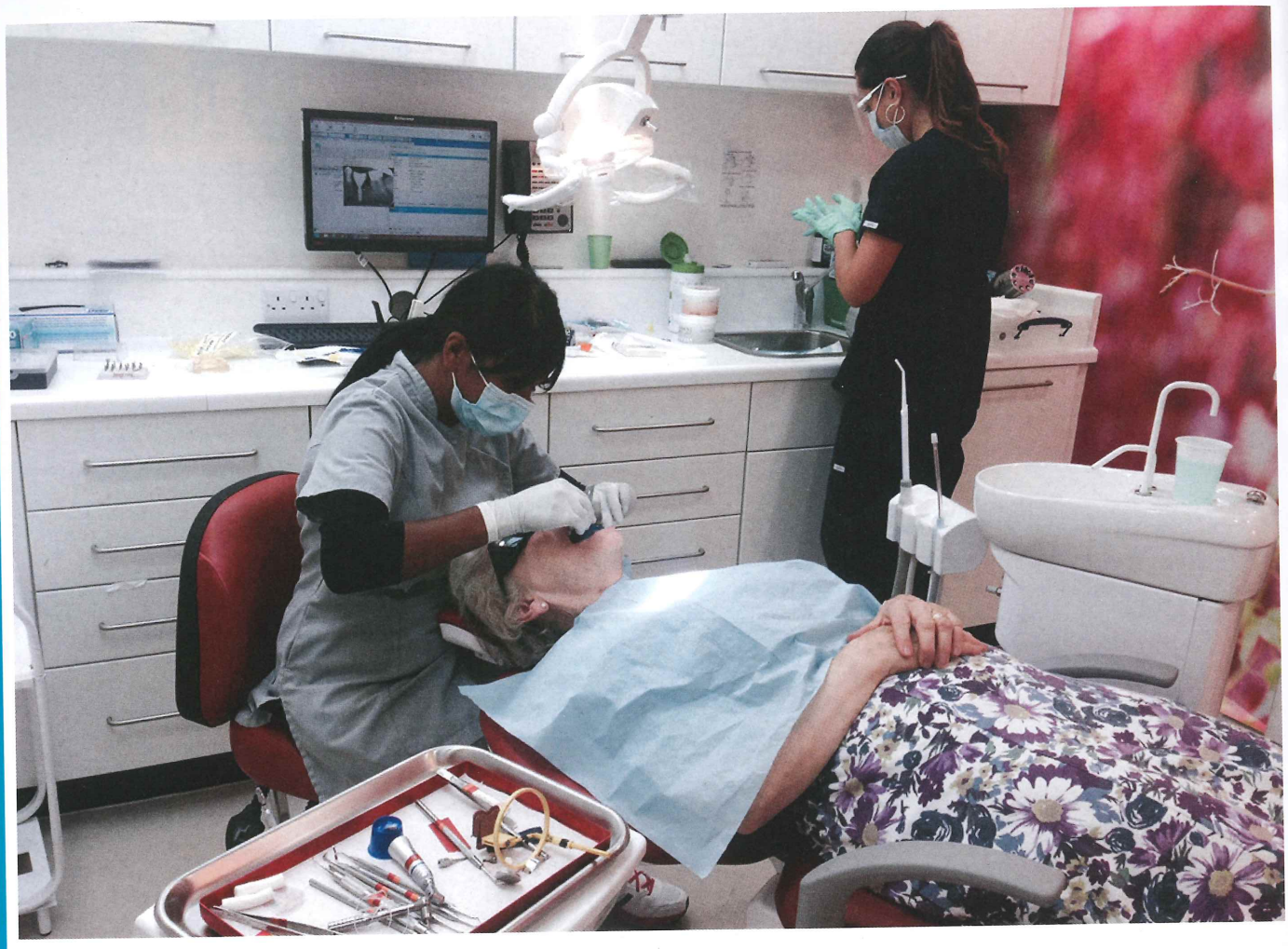
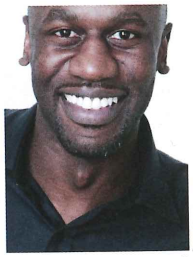
Quality training

Martin Wanendeya discusses the importance of mentors when learning new skills.



With more and more dentists becoming involved with implant dentistry, and in particular with implant restorations, focusing on the quality of training and education is essential.



Martin Wanendeya
is the principal dentist at Ten Dental.

Only with the highest standard of instruction will dental professionals be able to provide the very best clinical care to their patients. Training to become a dentist takes a number of years, and even once fully qualified, the learning process does not stop. Dental practitioners have to undergo a set amount of continued professional development (CPD), and although not mandatory, setting goals for personal or business growth is equally important.

Further training can help practitioners to develop their careers and discover their area of specialism, as well as improving the individual practice and standards of the industry as a whole. There are of course many options and opportunities available to practitioners. However, if choosing to progress into implantology, dentists can benefit from a varied and fulfilling career that is both challenging and rewarding.

When it comes to implant dentistry, there are three broad options for dentists to consider: recognise and refer all implant cases; identify and refer the surgical phase but restore implants that have been placed by a trained surgeon; or undertake both the surgical➲

and restorative components.

Many dentists will not want to get involved with placing implants and may not have the time or initial outlay for the training and start up costs. However, it is important to understand the essential principles so that you can properly advise patients and guide them through the process.

Implant restoration is a viable option for many, as it requires very little financial investment for significant gains. Great results can be attained for the patient and practitioner and with no need for surgical procedures. By teaming up with a specialist practice that offers referrals, dentists can remain involved with the patient's treatment and provide them with that all important maintenance phase.

Nevertheless, as the undergraduate curriculum does not include training in implant dentistry, those wanting to provide restorative implant treatment in the UK have to undertake further training to ensure they are appropriately qualified.

With many courses available from a variety of providers including universities, hospitals, individuals and commercial organisations, choosing a course can be a confusing affair. With very little guidance as to which type of course is best, deciding on one that offers quality guidance and support is essential.

Training in implantology is currently governed by the training standards working group, which develops, reviews and updates the standards in light of any new developments in implant dentistry. The document published by the group helps to ensure the high standards of education, training and clinical care in implant dentistry in the UK are adhered to. However, serving as a guide, it is still the onus of the individual learner to demonstrate the adequacy of his/her training, both academically and clinically, before starting to practice implant dentistry.

Gaining the necessary hands-on experience is therefore vital and finding a course that covers all aspects in-depth with plenty of practical training will help to cement the theory learnt.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects when choosing a course is to look at the experience of the mentors. Not only should they have a number of years of clinical exposure, but also experience of previous mentoring and training. The way that information is imparted can have a significant impact on learning and development.

Implant and restorative dentistry also requires a substantial amount of support, whether you are just starting out or have some previous knowledge, being able to contact your mentor for help and advice will give you the confidence and reassurance that you need.

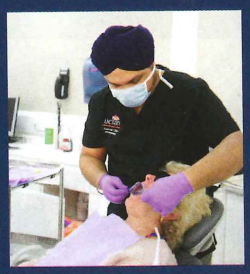
Attending a well-structured implant restoration course that offers quality hands-on practice can provide you with a strong foundation on which to build your skills and competence. The mentors you choose should also be knowledgeable and approachable and willing to support you every step of the way.

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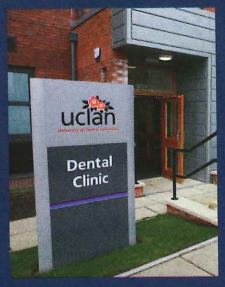
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