

Add another string to your bow

Rachel Moreland discusses the role of the dental nurse in a 3D printing workflow



The role of the dental nurse has always been subject to lots of change and evolution. From dental surgery assistants to where we are today, the position has always been pivotal in allowing the provision of excellent dentistry and helping the smooth running of a dental practice.

Until the Scope of Practice was introduced in 2009, the role of the dental nurse was somewhat limited. This new legislation allowed extended duties to be added, meaning that the role became more appealing than ever before.

The opportunity to enjoy a wider

skillset within the dental practice elevated this position from 'job' to 'career' status for many.

The option to pursue skills that are of interest and add value to a dental nurse's day-to-day role now means dental nursing can really be tailored to each individual.

It allows dental nurses to keep pace with the ever-changing tools and techniques within the profession, while helping to support the wider team in implementing the kind of dentistry each practice strives to provide.

Dental nurses and digital dentistry

The development of digital dentistry offers further scope for dental nurses, allowing them to join the practice in its evolution into the digital era.

With the development of the intraoral scanning process, and the inception of 3D printers, the role of a dental nurse becomes crucial in the adoption of new technologies by dental practices.

Digital dentistry began with the introduction of digital X-ray systems, which made the process of producing radiographs more streamlined – and less messy.

Gone are the days of dipping X-rays in solutions; now we have digitally produced images that immediately pop up on screen.

Dental nurses have always played an integral part in the adoption of any new technologies introduced into the practice, and digital dentistry is no exception.

This is proven by the fact that they now have the opportunity to undertake a postgraduate qualification in radiography and become the radiation protection supervisor for the practice, creating a digital radiography solution for the practice. New technologies can therefore boost a dental nursing career and ensure the role is key to long-term success in practice.

A registered and qualified dental nurse, with appropriate training, has the ability to scan a patient, leaving it to the dentist to then prescribe and diagnose. This means that a dental nurse can often play a vital role at the start of any patient journey.



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Step it up

With the introduction of 3D printers and design software, this role steps up a notch – not only is the 3D printer a fantastic new piece of kit that helps to make processes faster, more efficient, and cost effective for both the practice and patient, but it also adds another career dimension.

With training, a dental nurse can use an intraoral scan to design an appliance (such as a splint) and, subsequently, print it. Indeed, with DentaMile Connect software from DMG, the power is in their hands

Following full initial training and ongoing support, a dental nurse can design a splint with a few clicks of the mouse. The design is then sent to the 3D printer on-site and the process of producing the splint continues. They simply load the resin into the printer (along with the digital format of the splint), prepare the machine according to instructions and watch as the 3D print

process begins. It's that simple.

During this time, the dental nurse can return to other duties – the printer requires no attention until the job is complete.

Once printed, the splint will need to be washed and cured – another automated process that just requires it to be transferred from one machine to another.

Full training is provided from the outset, with ongoing support as required, so dental nurses can rest assured they won't be left feeling overwhelmed by this new technology.

In fact, every dental team we have trained on 3D printing has been amazed at the simplicity of the process, with many excited at the prospect of being able to design and produce appliances on-site. For dental nurses, this is simply another string to their bow.

Streamlined

When a dental practice invests in a digital workflow, it offers so many benefits for the

business, the team and the patients.

Digitalisation boosts efficiency and means that patients can complete their treatment in a shorter time-frame.

The practice also enjoys enhanced profits, and the team has new skills to learn and implement. For a dental nurse, their workflow becomes more streamlined and their skillset evolves further.

The team at DMG offers a full training and support system to all members of the dental team to help every step of the digital journey. With the introduction of the full-service digital solution from DMG, which includes hardware, software and resins, everyone has a role to play in the introduction of a digital workflow in the dental practice.

For more information about DMG Dental UK, visit www.dmg-dental.co/en-gb, email info@dmg-dental.co.uk or call 01656 789401



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