

Routine and ethics

Dentistry magazine's Julian English gets an insight into the working life of specialist implant dentist, Harry Shiers



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What do you do?

I'm a specialist implant dentist in practice in Cavendish Square, just off Harley Street in London's West End.

What is a typical day?

I'm a man of routine. I get up around 5.00am, put the kettle on, then I spend about 15 minutes stretching because I have a dodgy back from playing rugby. Then I hit the gym and swimming pool, training for around 25 to 30 minutes. I get to work for 7.30am.

I run a small general dental practice, but the bulk of my work is referred implants. In the mornings, I tend to do paperwork and letters, and check up on any patients that needed lab work. I see between eight and 12 patients a day.

As a referring dentist, how do I know you're not going to steal the patient?

Because it is a deeply unethical practice. Once we know who the patient is and what they want done, there can be no confusion. I pride myself on my reputation; I don't want to do the wrong thing. Why would a referring dentist send another patient back to me?

Tell me about your training?

I qualified from UCH in 1966 or 1967, then I did various attachments for post-graduate education. I did my first implant course and went on to complete membership exams MGDS, which took almost three years. I then did my LDS, I think that was in 1986 or 1987. I did a year on attachment at the Eastman, studying implant dentistry, my MFDS, then a two-year MSc programme at Guy's. I think I reached my post-graduate training at that point, as far as ambitions and examinations were concerned. I promote myself through word of mouth, lecturing and writing for various journals.

What do the lectures cover?

The restorative aspects of implant dentistry. I won't teach surgery, because I think you need to go to a hospital to learn how to do it properly. The hospital offers an environment with proper tutors to guide you and the back up if anything goes wrong. Time is the issue – it takes two years and half of that is full time. You cannot work so most dentists don't want to make the commitment or meet the financial costs, through the fees and the lost income.

You've seen 12 patients today, what do you do out of work?

I read. I have to dedicate so much time a week to implant literature. After that I am very interested in history. I'm just reading a very good book by Boris Johnson called *The Dream of Rome*.

What are your sporting exploits?

I used to play rugby and I sail. I'm trying to buy a sailing yacht, a 50-55 footer. I dream of sailing around the world, but I can't just up and leave work, so I'm making an ambitious 10-year plan.

Harry Shiers BDS, MSc (implant dentistry), MGDS, MFDS, took his initial training in implant dentistry in 1989 with the Institut Straumann. He spent a year teaching undergraduates at The London Dental Hospital and since then he has spent a year at the Eastman Dental Institute studying implants prior to completing the two-year part-time MSc in implant dentistry at Guy's Hospital, London. He currently runs a referral practice, lectures regularly and sits on the editorial advisory boards of numerous dental publications.