

These pages offer you the chance to open topics for debate, discuss issues, or even offer advice to fellow readers. In this issue, we have different views on a recent article published in *Vital* – what did you think? Send us your views on these issues or anything to do with working in the dental profession. We look forward to hearing from you.

Maintaining standards

I was most disappointed to see such a poor photograph used to illustrate the news item on team working on page eight of the Spring 2006 issue. A journal with aspirations to raise the status of DCPs should at the very least portray only the highest standards of practice behaviour. Neither the dental nurse nor the patient is wearing protective eyewear of any sort, and I would hope that this image is not to be used again.

*C J Cox, St Dunstan's Dental Practice,
Canterbury*

Vital replies: Many thanks for your eagle eyes. You can rest assured that we will not be using this picture again and will in future be checking all photos for best health and safety practice before publishing them. We hope that you enjoy the collection of the latest Colgate Oral Health Professional products (£100 RRP) that are on their way to you.



Star Letter

The topic of our Winter Perspectives column certainly got a mixed response. While some of you thought it wasn't the right message to be sending to patients, others saw the light-hearted side of the article and sent in their own anecdotes. Well, *Vital* does like to stir up debate among team members and would love to hear from anybody else who has an opinion on the article. Here are two examples of the differing letters we received.

Irritating patients, irritated dentist

I was appalled by the question for the Perspectives column in the Winter issue of *Vital*, "What most irritates you about patients?" In common with the rest of my dental colleagues I hold patients in the highest esteem, recognising that without them our practices, our dental teams and indeed the whole of our profession would be unnecessary. We are continually reminded by the Department of Health and the British Dental Association to be more "patient-centred" and yet your journal allows this trivia to be published, clearly stating that we find our patients irritating. How much better to have compiled anecdotes

describing how much we like our patients. I only hope none of your publications find their way into our waiting rooms. If this article was read by patients it would do nothing to raise confidence in the dental profession at a time when we badly need it. I hope you publish an apology in the next issue to any patients who might have been hurt by it, and also stating that this is the view of a minority of dental teams and probably only those in the NHS.

*Dr Martin Wills, Waterside Dentalcare,
Cornwall*

All sorts

Whilst reading the Winter Perspectives column, I wondered if anyone else had come across the rather amusing comments that we often hear from patients. Firstly, we ask when making an appointment, "Can you come in at anytime?" to which they reply "Oh yes, I'm flexible."

So we offer them a day and the patient responds "Oh no, not then I'm busy!"

Or, secondly, when we offer a patient an appointment, for instance Tuesday 6 December, they ask, "What day of the week is that?"

Well, it does take all sorts.

*Melanie Beaumont, Receptionist,
Kingswood Dental Practice,
East Sussex*