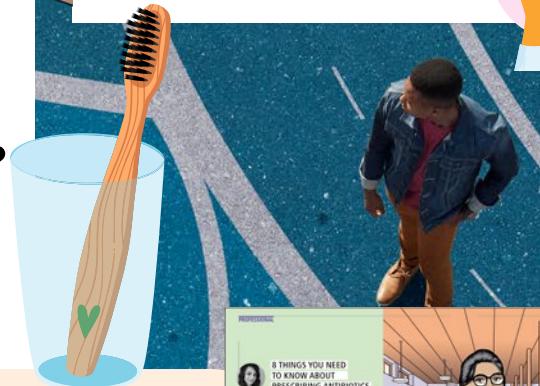




EDITORIAL

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Happy New Year! Welcome to 2020, and welcome back to another series of stimulating articles in this issue of *BDJ Student*.

We all know that the mouth is the gateway to the body, so it comes – or should come – as no surprise that a multitude of systemic conditions have oral manifestations. As dental students we have a pivotal role in noticing abnormal oral anatomy e.g. cobblestone mucosa and asking further questions about the patient's general health and symptoms that may indicate a medical condition. P.S. does anyone remember what condition cobblestone mucosa suggests? The article on

medical problems that dental students should recognise is incredibly relevant to us and so it's a great way of refreshing our knowledge on things that we may not see that frequently in the clinic.

On a similar note, I was fortunate to attend the Mouth Cancer Action Month launch hosted by the Oral Health Foundation to mark the start of their annual campaign in November. What stuck with me were the words of Karen Liesching Schroder, an oral cancer survivor who spoke of her own

touching experience with this deadly cancer. It was heart-warming to hear from someone speaking so passionately with only half of her tongue left post biopsy and various surgeries to remove the cancerous lesions, with such a clear hunger for life. It was striking to note how even those who appear healthy among us, who do not engage in common risk factors such as smoking and drinking alcohol are still susceptible to this cruel disease.

As aspiring healthcare professionals, it is vital that we are constantly checking for any changes to healthy anatomy of our patients and remaining alert from the second we see them in the waiting room up until the end of the appointment as one small referral could literally change that patient's



informing us of her first-hand experience with this nasty disease, did so with a large proportion of

A particular phrase that Karen used that resounded with me was 'patients are living, but they are living with what we have done to save them'. She gave such an empowering speech

life. The cancer survivor referred to a brown sticky exudate that emerged from her throat following radiotherapy, a side effect that elucidates how unpleasant the deleterious effects of treatment can be.



out by the dentist, every 6 months to a year. Many are not familiar with the free checks available to the public, given by dentists looking to combat this underestimated disease. According to the NHS, the number of cases is continuing to increase, with around 8,300 cases being diagnosed every year in the UK. Needless to mention, without early detection these patients will likely die.

In honour of Mouth Cancer Action Month in November – and of mouth cancer action all year-round – just a reminder to continue looking out for ulcers that do not heal within three weeks, red and white patches in the mouth or unusual swellings that may appear benign but indeed have a malignant origin.

Wishing you all the best in 2020!

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