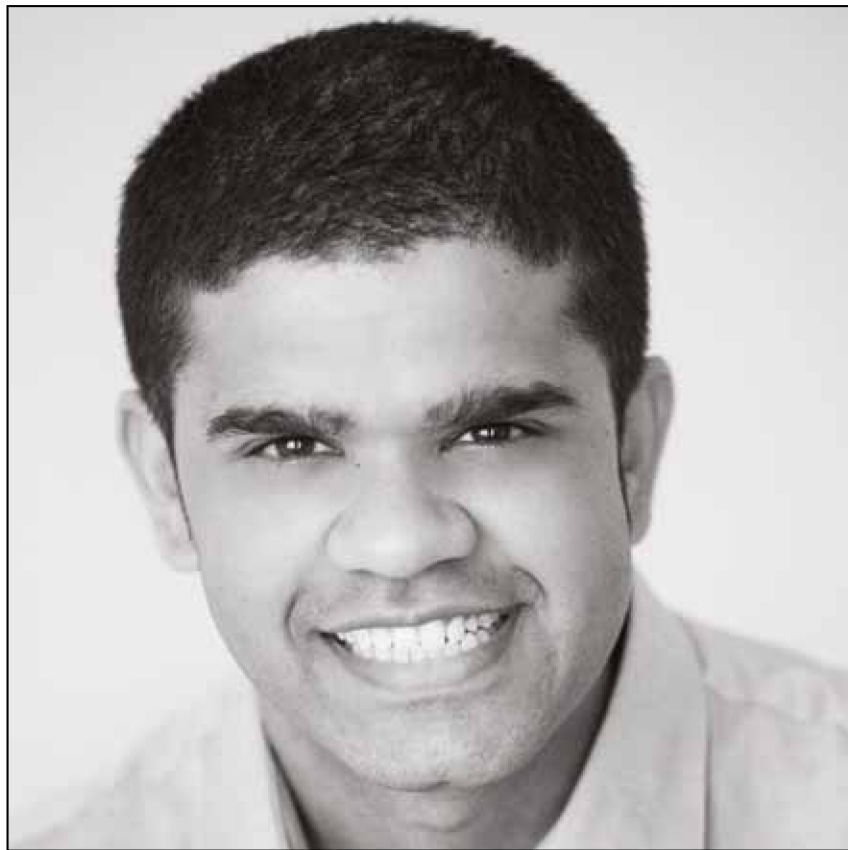


Perspectives in practice...



Watch out, Big Brother is watching you! **DR NILESH R PARMAR**, one of the few dentists in the UK to have a degree from all three London dental schools, looks at the professional implications of social media and introduces the 2013 Ice White Charity Xmas Party...

SOCIAL media is huge, in fact, it accounts for most of the mobile Internet traffic in this country. Almost everyone and his dog (yes, dog) has a social media presence. We, as dentists, love social media and have taken to it like a duck to water. Everyone who is anyone in dentistry appears to be tweeting, posting and sharing things on Facebook on a regular basis. We post so much that I sometimes wonder if any of us do any work during the day – not according to my Twitter feed! I think us naughty dentists are checking our accounts between patients whilst our poor dental nurses are having to perform a total surgery disinfection, change into a new set of scrubs and wash up so that the next patient can be admitted, whilst adhering to HTM 01-05 guidelines.

But, be warned; the GDC has recently

issued its guidance on social media for dentists. "Hang on just a cotton picking minute," I hear you say, "what business is it of the GDC as to what I write online? Surely, if it's a personal account, then I can post as many pictures of cats, dogs and, er, interesting things as I see fit, without having to worry." Well, yes and no. The main concern appears to be maintaining the dentist/patient boundary in your social media profiles. Dentists must think very carefully before accepting friend requests from patients, as you may want your private life to remain just that – private.

In certain instances, people will be your friends first and then come and see you for dental treatment... what happens then?

There is a trend on Facebook at the moment for dentists to post pictures of

their work; we see some lovely before and after cases popping up along with interesting radiographs. There is no direct guidance relating to this as of yet, but the GDC appears to suggest that as long as the patient cannot be identified from the material and it has a valid educational content, then it can be posted.

But, what if my Facebook/Twitter profile just says "Joe Bloggs" with no reference to my job, no teeth related posts, just a normal person posting various random things. Well, as far as the guidance says, you could still be identified as a member of the dental profession and, as such, must not behave in a way that could bring the profession into disrepute.

So, what should we take from this? Well, treat your social media presence as an extension of your surgery. Feel free to share anything you like, but keep in mind that your patients, the GDC, dental law partnership and anyone else could be reading it. Keep it clean, keep it safe, stay away from any political/social conspiracies and you should be just fine. Social media should be fun, not scary.

Well done reps

So, the BDTA Dental Showcase 2013 has been and gone for another year and, once again, I would like to say thanks to all of the reps who spent three days plus standing, talking, smiling and generally putting up with "smart alec" dentists talking to them. I still have no idea how they do it, I would be the most miserable, moody and grouchy so-and-so after two hours, let alone three days!

Remember, next time a rep comes to visit you, it's not an easy job and a good rep is like gold dust. I should know.

Ice White is back

Last year, I had an idea to do some good from our extravagant revelry. Surely, between my friends and myself, something good could come out of our antics; maybe a charity event. After a lot of brainstorming and help from a few friends, the Ice White Xmas Party was born – a charity event held in central London, open to all but with a dental emphasis. We had raffle prizes, entertainment, celebrity guests, fire dancers, podium dancers and even an ice sculpture in the shape of a dental implant.

When I first envisaged it, I was aiming for, maybe, 100 people to turn up. However, through the generosity of my sponsors and private individuals who donated some amazing raffle prizes,

we attracted more than 200 people to Holborn House. In fact, the club was at full capacity and the only complaint from most of the partygoers was that there were too many people! Through your support and generosity (and copious drinks consumed), we raised more than £3,000 for the homeless charity, CRISIS, at a time of year when the money is most needed.

Although I vowed not to do it again (it really is a lot of work), my arm has been twisted and the charity event is back. Unfortunately, the venue we used last year is no more, so I decided to try and make it bigger and better.

This year, the Ice White Charity Xmas Party is on a boat. Not a moving boat (we would all turn up late and miss it!), but on a Goliath of a boat moored permanently along London's Embankment – HMS President. Taking place in the Gunroom and the upper deck, the space is much larger, the entertainment more ambitious and the bar very well stocked.

The chosen charity for 2013 is Operation Christmas Child (OCC), the world's largest children's Christmas project, run by the charity, Samaritan's Purse. The charity sends thousands of shoeboxes filled with gifts to children all over the globe. Despite the abundance of shoeboxes sent to OCC each year, the shipping donation of £3 is often forgotten. A really worthy cause, all profits from the Ice White Charity Xmas Party will go towards helping to pay the much needed shipping cost for these boxes. Just £3 could make a child's Christmas wish come true.

As I have grown older (and perhaps wiser), I have understood the necessity in helping those less fortunate than you. As a profession, we are suitably placed to do some good and, indeed, we have many excellent ventures with Bridge2Aid, Heart Your Smile, etc. really making a difference in people's lives. This event aims to bring us all together at a big party to start the festive season, whilst at the same time raising money for a fantastic cause.

This year, there will be a small entry fee of £10, but we are set to have a plethora of entertainment, along with the return of some fantastic raffle prizes to be won. Don't miss out, reserve your space on the Ice White Charity Xmas Party Facebook page or email dmileshparmar@gmail.com. I look forward to seeing you all aboard the HMS President on December 14. ■