

How to write for a dental journal

Claire Berry suggests dental nurses should 'just do it' if they are still umming and ahing over committing pen to paper



Claire Berry is an award-winning dental hygienist and a medical aesthetics practitioner. She trained to be a dental hygienist while serving in the army. She qualified in 2009 in Aldershot and now works as a hygienist in the North of England, at practices in Doncaster and York. For more, visit <https://promedicalaesthetics.co.uk>

Do you ever read through journals and wonder how these people have got to the position where what they have to say is good enough to be printed? Or, do you read a journal and think you have something to say that the dental community needs to hear?

I have always enjoyed writing and knew that one day I wanted to be published. I saw other dental professionals writing in journals and decided to investigate exactly how this is achieved. No one had put together a manual on how to do this, so I guess I learnt the hard way. One thing for sure is that I have never looked back and

thoroughly enjoy doing this alongside my clinical career.

Have your say

The industry is calling out for professionals to have their say. Remember that the dental profession is a giant team all working towards the same goal, which is improving the oral health of the nation and providing excellent standards of dentistry to our patients. It is a team work approach to get there so we should all be contributing. I feel there is a real need for more dental nurses to be writing for all to see. If it something you have been considering then I urge you to 'just do it'.

Here are some of my tips you can take to get your work out there:

- 1** Make a list of topics that are important to you. If you are writing on subjects about which you are passionate, then you will enjoy the experience. You will have more to say and you will write a better piece that is more likely to get picked up by a magazine or journal.
- 2** Make a point of reading articles from the journals in which you wish to write. I have a style of my own – in fact, people tell me they can pick out my work because of this – but the same style doesn't always work for every publication. Some have different requirements to others or require different word counts. Read the magazines where you want your work to be featured and get a grasp on tone and content.
- 3** Do not worry about the design, as the publishers deal with that. Your part to play is delivering content. Write it in a Word document and send that to the magazine with a short email briefly describing the topic and outlining your career history and qualifications to date. It's a wonderful feeling seeing your words turned into a work of art with colour and pictures on a page to illustrate your work.
- 4** You do not have to have a Master's or a PhD to get published. Do not worry about spelling and grammar. The piece is proof read numerous times by yourself and others until it is perfect to print. The initial draft will not go to print, so do not get hung up on the minutiae of writing style and standards.
- 5** Practise citing. Every time you make a reference to an article, online page or quote for example, you have to reference it properly. If

you don't know how to cite, do not worry. Make a note of the website address, book or article you used and the editors can help you. Once you have learnt how to do it, it'll become second nature as you use sources for your work.

- 6** Do not be afraid to put yourself out there. The worst that can happen is that your piece is not used – or perhaps sent back with some requests regarding amendments. Trust me when I say that no one judges you. In fact, it is quite the opposite. It is celebrated that you have taken the time and effort to put something together that is readable and useful. Remember, sometimes if it is not used in one publication, they may be able to suggest where you can send it to be used elsewhere.
- 7** Networking is key. Make sure you go to conferences when you can. Get talking to people in the industry. Become a member of numerous and relevant professional societies and associations and get involved in your profession.
- 8** The dental world is calling out to hear from you. What you have to say is important to you, to your peers and colleagues. Remember we are a team and your voice is as important as the next dental professional. Let us know your experience and what is important to you. It helps us all learn or gives us all insights.
- 9** If this is what you want to get into, it is out there for the taking – you just have to go out of your way sometimes to discover the opportunities and use them to your advantage.
- 10** And lastly, don't let YOU hold you back! It's not who you are that holds you back, it's who you think you are not.

Dental Nursing's quick guide for new authors

We are always looking for new authors to join the ranks of those dental nurses who have already taken the plunge and contributed articles to this journal. The easiest topics to write about are those for which you have a passion and we can help shape copy into relevant and readable content for our readers and design the page to maximise appeal. The most important thing of all is to enjoy it, make sure it is unique copy and will educate and entertain our readers. Below, some guidelines for those looking to add to their skillset with some insightful words...

Content

Articles must be relevant to our readership – dental nurses – and may take the form of a generic discussion, such as an opinion piece, a look at new developments, a consideration of key issues in the profession, a review of practices, legal issues, career roles, case studies and so on.

We recommend potential authors take a look at several issues of *Dental Nursing* to get a feel for voice and tone. We also expect unique copy – authors should not plagiarise or self-plagiarise i.e. use copy previously published elsewhere by them or anyone else.

Articles may not be product focused or advertorial in nature. For example, an article on the importance of decontamination is acceptable whilst an article on a particular brand of disinfectant is not. Brief mentions of specific products are acceptable when necessary for the article's discussion.

Please include a short author biography – one sentence stating the current/most relevant role of the author. Please include a high-resolution author photo.

An article submission for CPD will be peer reviewed (by two or more referees) after which it will be accepted, rejected or returned with suggested amendments or revision. Any CPD papers will need

to be accompanied by aims and objectives and CPD questions – five questions each with four possible answers, the correct one highlighted (for our purposes only).

Word count

Typically, articles should be between 750 (single page) or 1500 words (double page), increasing in 750-word increments.

Article format

Please submit articles as a Word document and email to juliebissett.jb@googlemail.com, along with any accompanying images in JPEG format where possible. We can use tables, charts, figures and photographs/images. Please include captions for each. Please note that obtaining permission to reproduce an image that has been used elsewhere is the author's responsibility.

References

Articles may be submitted with or without references. If references are used, please list them at the end of the article in the Harvard style. References will not always be printed but will be kept on file to be provided to readers on request. A guide to Harvard referencing is available on request.



