

STUDENTS

KISHAN SHETH



Dear fellow colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen, it was fantastic to witness a very positive response to our first two editions of *DentaltownUK*, which featured some incredible content from many of the top figures in UK dentistry.

It also showcased the great work done by Zain Hameed, Awais Ali, Lawrence Sharkey, Ajay Mehta, Aditi Goel, Sahil Sharma, all very positive and inspiring members of the dental student community.

DentaltownUK includes a student section because we truly believe that it is important for the future generation of the profession to share ideas and opinions with their more experienced colleagues.

It also provides an excellent opportunity to understand the importance of a work/life balance whilst embarking on a dental educational programme, and discuss food, hobbies, style, travel and student experiences that can happen outside the clinical and learning environment.

This section features a look into the lives of Arjun Puri, a student studying in Madrid, as well as Sunmeet Kandhari, a student at King's College London. We also take a look at the elegantly written article on stress management by Mohammad Moinuddin, as he shares with us his key points in overcoming stress as a dental student and balancing his hobbies with his dental education.

I also share with you all some key tips that I've learnt on the subject of public speaking, and hope that

it serves as a useful learning tool or gentle refresher.

Modern dentistry demands that high levels of quality work be done in a short amount of time. Your patients, colleagues and clinical treatment must also be managed effectively. All of these factors can add to your stress load.

Many dentists and students that I speak to report: feeling inadequate for the task, boredom, a need to develop extreme attention to detail and the continuous striving for absolutely perfect restorations, and challenges regarding treating patients who are anxious.

Challenges regarding developing professional relationships between team members and fighting off eyestrain, back and neck problems also create important considerations for dental students.

However, stress is not always a bad thing. Small amounts of stress are great efficiency boosters, which increase performance. However, surplus amounts can have dangerous effects on health. I am sure that you will enjoy this edition of *DentaltownUK*; it's packed with some great content from very special individuals in the profession. Please do engage with our message boards and let us know about your thoughts. We'd love to hear from you! ■



When we see and hear some of the best public speakers on the planet, we automatically assume that they were born that way. Whilst some individuals may be born with a gift, the art of public speaking is not a gift but an ongoing and developing characteristic. There are many courses out there that may help you to leave your audiences spellbound, but the following is an account of my experiences and learning in the art of engaging audiences.

I'm not an expert in the field but I've been privileged to put on talks with some high-profile dentists in the UK, and I've represented the UK on two occasions at international conferences and taken the stage several times at national conferences. I don't believe there is any secret to public speaking, but having a few tips and tricks in mind can help.

Here are some of my top tips for engaging audiences. Keep them in mind when you next have a public speaking engagement.

1 Be yourself. In normal day-to-day conversations we have no problem being ourselves, but when the time comes to stand up and deliver a speech, something dramatically changes! We shift our focus from our content and ourselves to the public audience. I believe that to engage an audience effectively we must focus on the *speaking* and let go of the *public*. My mentors have shared several tricks such as imagining the audience all naked, but I find that imagining I'm talking to myself without anyone listening works best. I blank out the environment. By doing so, I feel much more relaxed and able to deliver a great speech. Don't be put



Kishan with fellow judges at London Material's Society, when he was crowned London Material's Society young lecturer of the year 2015.

off by the size of your audience; be yourself and you'll form a direct connection with the people to whom you speak.

2 Don't aim for perfection. Even the best public speakers occasionally make mistakes at some point. And as the speaker you'll notice any mistakes more than anyone in your audience—you're the only one who really knows what you're supposed to say. I've made many mistakes on stage, from forgetting the next line to incorrectly pronouncing a word, but I think it's vital that you don't stop or apologise to your audience for a minor slip-up—keep going. Even when I've 'urmmmeeddd' or left a word out, it has occasionally acted in my favour, because it allowed me to connect with my audience. My audience discovered that I'm not perfect; I'm real and make mistakes too.

3 Visualization is a great tool: See it and you will speak it.

Salespeople envision themselves working hard and closing the deal; businesspeople envision developing new ventures that become ultrasuccessful; athletes imagine

themselves taking first place before they even start the activity. This tool is also important for public speaking. In my humble experience, the best way to conquer anxiousness and preperformance stress is your mind. Mindset is the key! Have a positive mindset and a vision of you delivering a spectacular performance to your audience, and you'll be waving goodbye to the shaky hands and sweaty forehead sooner than you can imagine.

4 Be disciplined—after all, practice makes perfect.

We've all heard the phrase 'practice makes perfect', but so many of us need reminding that this is also true for public speaking. The best speakers in the world practice, practice and practice. They don't deliver a jaw-dropping performance without preparation. My goal has never been to be a perfect public speaker; I want to develop and continue developing into an *effective* public speaker. I often find that a script provides me with the right framework and structure for my talk, and I begin preparing at least a week in advance of a public speaking engagement.

5 Every speech needs to be personal and tailored to the audience.

Regardless of the topic, every audience will respond best when speakers personalise the way in which they communicate toward them. People like to hear about other people's experiences—the successes, failures and everyday humorous anecdotes that make up their lives. I've also found that people enjoy stories more than just facts, so try to make the presentation

resemble a story and work the facts into the story. This is a great way to ensure your listeners warm up to you.

6 A little bit of anticipation works wonders. I've learnt that less is usually more. Surprise your audience by making your presentation a little bit shorter than anticipated, and I believe that it's always better to leave your listeners wishing you had spoken for just a few more minutes than having them squirming in their seats waiting for your speech finally to end.

I hope that the above pointers will help each of you, regardless of your public speaking experience, to develop and stretch your skill set. Sometimes we just need a bit of a refresher every now and then about what works for other people, and what strategies you would perhaps like to try. Remember, though—no public speaker was ever born that way, they have developed through experience and knowledge. One of my favourite quotes is, 'You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great'. This is most definitely true in the art of public speaking. ■



Kishan speaking at the International Dental Conference, Sharjah, UAE



STUDENT PROFILE

Name: Arjun Puri

Age: 22

University: Fourth-year dental student at Universidad Europa de Madrid

Area of residence: Madrid

I usually get up at 7 a.m. each day and live in a studio apartment, around a 15-minute walk away from the university campus. Our fourth year of dental education consists of a split between lectures and practical work.

I have always wanted to go into a profession where I could have the opportunity to take care of people and improve their lives. The level of manual dexterity required with dentistry appealed to me, as I was keen for my career choice to have a hands-on approach. With dentistry there is a lifetime of learning, a challenging career and a profession I can envision myself doing. Another reason I took into consideration was choosing a profession where I could balance my professional and family life. After GCSE examinations I explored various professions from different fields, but I have always had a great passion for healthcare. When I carried out my work experience at my local dental practice, I instantly thought to myself that this would be something I can see myself doing. So from that day I was determined to study dentistry and achieve my goals.

One of the areas of study I really enjoy is prosthetic dentistry as the results that can be achieved can have a significant impact on an individual's life. There is an element of artistry involved which is why this subject is appealing to me. Currently I am enjoying all aspects of my course, which makes it a challenge to narrow down a path that I may consider to specialise in.

From a young age I have expressed entrepreneurial qualities by buying and selling collectable items (such as vintage games) by utilising social media. Creating and growing a business is a goal that I would strongly consider in my future. Whilst many say that business education should not be included in the dental curriculum, I strongly believe that in the dental curriculum it would be very beneficial to have a basic understanding of the business aspect of running a dental practice. However, for a deeper understanding on the business aspect on dentistry, I believe that this should be undertaken outside of the dental curriculum.

I have begun to give consideration to the career path I'd like to go down after qualification. I would like to create more awareness and provide more information regarding opportunities for British students studying dentistry abroad. Perhaps build a community where current dentists from the UK (that have completed their education abroad) can provide essential information and guidance for students looking to study dentistry abroad.

I strongly believe it is important to incorporate exercise into my day. I have always enjoyed playing racquet sports, especially badminton. I play badminton, as it is a sport which I have had a passion for since high school and I have continued that at university. I am also learning how to play the guitar, as music is another passion of mine. ■

Overcoming Stress in Dentistry

with

Mohammad MoinuddinFourth-year undergraduate student (BDS)
King's College London

Intro:

My wish to study dentistry stemmed from experiences shadowing my own general dentist as well as dental specialists of varying fields, and this passion has only grown during the past 3½ years of dental school.

Dentistry is an ever-advancing niche of healthcare which offers the unique combination of incorporating manual and artistic skills into a daily regime; the formation of close and long-term relationships with patients; and the ability to contribute positively to the community.

However, the degree does not come without its due stress, and at times is so trying that causes one to question whether it's worth continuing the subject. It is this aspect which I wish to focus on—looking at some of the evidence behind dental stress and how to cope with it, and an insight into my personal efforts to cope with the rigours of the course.

Stress in dentistry

Dr Michael Kesner, CEO of Quantum Leap Success in Dentistry, has said that dentistry has one of the highest burnout rates of all professions. He outlines some reasons for this, including the vast knowledge of medicine, materials, sciences and artistry required; the financial stresses of running a practice; the emotional stresses when dealing with difficult patients; and stresses relating to medicolegal matters.

However, what is also mentioned is the stress felt during dental school, where it can be argued that such long-term stresses may initiate (Rada & Johnson-Leong, 2004).

I feel that it is during this crucial time that one should capitalise on the university environment and what it can offer, enabling one to identify what helps relieve stress, before being thrust into the world of clinical practice and losing access to the same extracurricular opportunities. Indeed, Gale (1998)

highlighted the importance of becoming aware of the physical and emotional behaviours which one exhibits during stress, to overcoming it.

A study undertaken by Dr Wael Al-Omari (2005) examining the perceived stress among dental students, dental hygiene students and dental technology students found that some of the highest scores given by all students included those for 'inadequate time for relaxation' and 'examinations'; the two of which are explicitly linked where time required for studying for said examinations leaves little to relax; this was certainly the case for me.

As can be seen in Fig. 1, personal factors (defined by Al-Omari as including making friends, lack of time for relaxation, reduced holidays, etc.) show a significant contribution to one's stress particularly in the third and fourth years.

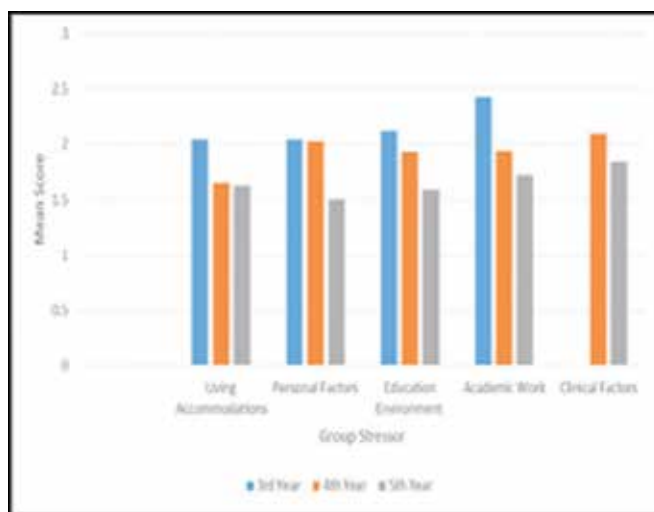


Fig. 1 Mean scores of potential stressor groups for dental students (adapted from Al-Omari (2005))

However, a further trend can be seen where academic work and clinical factors become the major stressors in play for fifth-year students. This is something one can expect when considering the increased stresses associated with finals assessments and applying for Dental Foundation year placements.

Moreover, qualitative studies by Dahan and Bedos (2010) have considered the typology of dental students based on their experiences of stress. Upon analysis of the data

Table 1 Typology of dental students according to their experience of stress (adapted from Dahan & Bedos, 2010)

	HIGHLY STRESSED STUDENTS	MODERATELY STRESSED STUDENTS	RELAXED STUDENTS
SOURCES OF STRESS (STRESSORS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fear of failure ➤ Heavy workload ➤ Transition periods ➤ Difficult relations with academic staff (only for struggling students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Workload ➤ Transition Periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Workload
HOW THEY COPE WITH STRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maladaptive coping skills: worrying, avoiding, wishful thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maladaptive coping skills: worrying, avoiding, wishful thinking ➤ Adaptive coping skills: extracurricular activities, support, control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adaptive coping skills: extracurricular activities, support, control

found (partially summarised in Table 1, p. 99), it is rather interesting to note how those engaging in adaptive coping methods such as extracurricular activities are of the less-stressed cohort than those using maladaptive mechanisms such as worrying and avoidance.

Of further pertinence is the fact that the major stressor concerning the more-relaxed students was that of the workload, as opposed to more personal factors, as was the case with highly stressed students.

Though the link may be somewhat tenuous, it is possible to relate Al-Omari's work with that of Dahan and Bedos: As students progress from earlier to more-senior years of dental school, their main stressor is that of the intense academic and clinical workload, and that indeed a more effective way to cope with this may be to adopt said adaptive coping mechanisms.

So where do I fit into all this? I'd like to take this opportunity to exhibit one of my adaptive coping mechanisms, which has aided me in overcoming stresses both in and outside of dental school.

Whilst returning home one night after watching *Iron Man 2*, I felt inspired and thought: "Wouldn't it be cool to have my own Iron Man costume?" Thus began research into how to go about doing this, whereupon I stumbled upon Pepakura, a form of modelling craftwork in which 2-D card templates are used to construct 3-D models through a combination of cutting, folding and gluing the prelabelled components.

One can digitally create one's own templates, or modify premade ones in size and complexity to suit a crafter's individual needs. Pepakura can be used to create many things, but is most commonly used to build wearable suits of armour, weapons and comic book artifacts, and this is what I chose to do.

I initially decided to build the Iron Man helmet, and as I researched more into the subject I discovered the potential to develop the initial card construction into a far more realistic piece of craftwork using fibreglass, cements and spray paint.

It in fact took me a year to complete the helmet, working in the spare hours between my AS studies, and a further year before I tackled the entire suit.

Fig 2. Summary of Projects to date



Since this, I have spent time over the past few years alongside my dental studies, experimenting with this creative process, using different materials, methods and sequences of manufacture (Table 2); taking on a variety of creative challenges (Fig. 2); and even participating at events such as ComiCon (Fig. 3). Pepakura is an activity which I thoroughly enjoy, and hope to continue learning from and developing my skill in, in the years to come.

Conclusion

Dentistry is both a stressful degree and profession. Evidence shows how engaging in an extracurricular activity as a means of relaxation is a crucial form of self-awareness

that is beneficial for long-term stress reduction. I personally have felt the benefits of having a hobby which I am passionate about.

It has enabled me to improve my manual dexterity and creative skills, which are essential within a dental setting, and helped to provide a vital escape from the relentless stresses of academia and clinical expectations.

Having a hobby, of whatever form, be it a sport, playing an instrument or reading books, is extremely important, in my opinion, not only to reduce stress in a working environment, but also to develop one's depth of character which academics cannot offer, thus creating a well-rounded individual: an admirable trait for a dentist to acquire certainly, but also to carry throughout life. ■



Table 2 Summary of Projects to date

Project	Base Materials	Manufacture Method
Iron Man Helmet (a)	Paper Car Body Filler (Cement)	Paper model fibre-glassed outside and inside Car body filler placed all over externally Hand sanded Primed Painted with gold and red metal spray paints Foam placed internally to customise helmet to my head size Sunglass lenses placed to cover eye spaces
Iron Man Suit (a)	Foam	Foam build sealed with PVA Primed Painted with gold and red metallic spray paints Buckles and Velcro attachments placed to clip all parts together LED lights placed with manual switch for chest lighting
Batman Cowl (based on 'The Dark Knight' movie) (b)	Foam Car Body Filler (Cement)	Foam build sealed with PVA Fibre-glassed with resin externally Car body filler placed all over externally Hand sanded Primed Painted with black matte spray paint
Deadpool Mask (c)	Paper Red Satin Black Leather White cloth	Paper model fibre-glassed externally Two layers red satin used to cover paper model and create smoother shape to mask Zip placed posteriorly to mask to enable easier placement/removal Black leather placed in areas surrounding eyes Thin, stretched white cloth used to cover eye spaces whilst enabling vision from inside mask
Power Rangers Helmet (d)	Foam Car Body Filler (Cement) Acrylic	Foam build sealed with PVA glue Car body filler applied externally Sanded Primed Painted with red metallic spray paint and paint marker pens (Gold, Silver and Black) Visor made from plastic bottle acrylic Buckles and metal hinge placed onto posterior segment of helmet to facilitate easier placement/removal Bicycle helmet head brace placed internally to enable adjustment of helmet once worn to fit range of head sizes (unlike Iron Man Helmet)
Master Chief Helmet (from 'Halo' gaming franchise) – to be completed (e)	Foam (...so far)	Foam build completed Rest of construction to follow

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STUDENT PROFILE

Name: Sunmeet Kandhari

Age: 23

University: King's College London
fourth-year dental student

Interesting fact: I work as a quad bike/activity instructor in a kid's day camp during the summer, and am a fencing coach for the KCL Fencing Society.

I live in Elephant and Castle during term time, but am from Feltham. If my flatmate doesn't wake me up with her loud elephant feet, I usually wake up around 8 a.m. each morning, and depending on the mode of transport, it's a five-minute drive, 10-minute sprint and a 20-minute walk to University. Or, eight if I take Peter with me—he's my penny board. I live in a flat with three other people I met in halls from my first year. Aside from those poor life choices, I also have some plants.

My breakfast is usually whatever I can put into my mouth as fast as possible without choking. It's taken some time to finesse the routine but as it stands right now it's 1 cup of lukewarm tea (you can't down hot), peanut butter toast, a banana and an apple. As for where I eat it, the first two in my flat while I pack my bag, the last two while I'm on my penny board. It's a good thing my jacket has big pockets; they really don't make banana-shaped holes in pants like they used to. Shame, really.

I decided to go into a career in dentistry because it was the best jack-of-all-trades. I knew I wanted to do something involving people, a heavy scientific element and the ability to use my hands. Four years in, I think I made the right choice. Then again,

I am still in my student bubble; no one's made me extract 30 teeth in one day yet! If anyone is reading this and would like to have a fourth-year dental student do such a thing, please let me know—I have quotas to meet. I sat on the King's Dentistry interview panel a while ago and all I could think was, 'That was me four years ago, and now here I am on the other side, helping to make a life-changing decision'. The candidates weren't the only ones with butterflies in their stomach that day.

Some of the topics we've been lectured about have been quite interesting—human disease for example. But it's hard to top being on the clinic: practicing on your own patients, problem solving when things don't go to plan. Last year I treated one of my friends; she, being a medical student, was surprised by how practical our degree was. For her, most of her time on clinic was spent shadowing doctors, taking histories, doing some bloods here and there. But with her I went through diagnosis, investigations and even early treatment. That kind of "hands-on" element isn't on the agenda with many other courses.

The course is challenging but quite rightly so—it wouldn't be a five-year degree otherwise! But if I had to pin it down to one thing which is the bane of my life: secondary impressions for C/C. Zinc oxide eugenol is not my friend!

I'm not sure about what I wish to go into after I qualify. Even now I juggle my extracurricular activities alongside the degree and I think those are the only things that stop me from burning out. I'd like to take that same ethos forward in my practicing career—one day hospital, one day teaching, one day practice. Who knows? I do like the idea of being a teacher, and running the DentEd scheme in King's has only solidified that ambition. On the flip side, I'm in the process of joining the army as a dentist. Two conflicting careers on the surface, but if you dig deeper you'll find they do share a lot of similarities.

I am the president of the KCL Fencing Society, where I get the privilege of legally stabbing people with swords—what's not to like? I started for the first time in university a few years ago.

As far as achievements go, I wouldn't really consider myself that athletically 'able'. I wasn't that sporty in school—just a bit of cross-country here and there, not the first pick for a team by any means. Thanks for that, asthma. And then I started fencing, not exactly sure what changed. But I wasn't terrible, shock horror. I think part of it's because fencing isn't all about how fit you are, it's known as a 'physical game of chess' for a reason and I couldn't agree more.

After training, I usually get back around 11 p.m. Not really much left in the evening then. Usually I just shower off my fencing sweatiness, warm up the frozen meal I prepped over the weekend (yes I'm a meal-prep-Sunday kind of guy) and reply to my emails. It's not all doom and gloom though; I have Wednesdays and Friday evenings off from fencing, so usually I spend those making enemies with my liver. It's a turbulent relationship.

Depends on your definition of exciting. Currently, some of my friends and I are in the process of organizing a pilot scheme within the dental school. We're looking to assay the effect of emotional intelligence on communication skills, and whether or not it can be changed. We just got approved for some funding, so hopefully we can get that project off the ground.

Other than that, there are lots of other things going on in the King's sphere, and it's one of the things I love about university life really. There's so much to do, and if you don't find your niche you can always start it; with so many people around, you're bound to find someone as like-minded as you. Just this year I was involved in planning a sports day between all the dental schools in the country, organising events for over 1,000+ people. That same term I acted in a performance show about teeth—a surreal experience to say the least.

Now, if you were to ask me what I had planned in fourth year, I probably wouldn't have mentioned either of those. I think it just goes to show how you can end up surprising even yourself. So that is why I genuinely don't know what the future holds for me. And I think there's some excitement in that. ■