

Dentists spend most of their waking hours working in practice, and don't get many opportunities to see inside other dentists' surgeries.

*DentaltownUK's* recurring feature takes you through the keyhole into surgeries in the UK and around the world. You'll meet the dentists and their teams, see the practices and learn about what has made it work for them.

## THROUGH THE KEYHOLE—SURGERY: HOME (LEICESTER)

### ABOUT THE DENTIST:

**Introduce yourself and tell us about what made you pursue a career in dentistry.**

I'm Dr. Alif Moosajee, the principal dentist at Oakdale Dental in Leicester. I wrote a book called *The Smiling Dentist*, a jargon-free guide for patients to help them understand their mouths better. (All proceeds from the book go to dental charity Bridge2Aid.)

As with all young Indian lads, my parents decided that I was either going to be a doctor or a lawyer. When I was in year 10 we did work experience, and it was arranged that I'd have one week at a magistrate's court and one week at a doctor's practice. They weren't able to get me into a GP surgery, so they must've thought, 'Just put him in a dental practice—he'll never know the difference!' I absolutely loved it. That day, I set my sights on becoming a dentist.

**If you hadn't become a dentist, what job would you have had?**

Just before A-level results day, I remember convincing myself that I wasn't going to get the requisite grades for dental school. I

decided that my fallback would be chemical engineering, because I quite enjoyed doing chemistry. I only very recently found out that chemical engineering doesn't really have that much to do with chemistry!

**Which university did you study at, and what qualifications do you have?**

I studied at Birmingham and graduated with a BDS in 2004.

**What are your particular interests and skills in dentistry?**

I love digital dentistry and implant treatment.

**Who has had the biggest influence in your career?**

My parents have been massively influential. Neither of them is a dentist; my dad is a teacher, but his thirst for knowledge and pursuit of self-improvement set me upon a path where I question everything and seek to find knowledge for my own improvement.

About 10 years ago I came across a fantastic oral surgeon, Dr. Colin Campbell, in



Nottingham when he was speaking at one of the dental shows for Carestream. I've stalked him, asked questions of him relentlessly and quite frankly made myself a bit of a nuisance to him, but I am massively grateful for all that I've learnt from him.

**What could you not work without?**

My Cerec machine and my loupes. About a year ago, I bought myself 5x magnification, and I cannot see your teeth properly without them.

**What's your favourite procedure to carry out?**

I love doing Cerec procedures, no matter if they're tooth-borne restorations, implant-borne restorations or planning guided implant surgery. I just love using it!

**Are you involved in any organisations or societies?**

I am a massive believer in dental education and converted the top floor of my practice into a purpose-built educational facility. Since then, I've become the study club director for Dental Tubules in Leicester and for the International Team for Implantology.

**What's the biggest problem or challenge in dentistry today?**

One of the two biggest challenges we face is being trapped either in or around an NHS system that continues to want more for less. The other problem is the current medicolegal climate where the game is been





## DR. ALIF MOOSAJEE'S TOP 5 FAVOURITE PRODUCTS

1. Cerec
2. CBCT
3. Intraoral camera
4. 5x loupes
5. Speed-increasing (red ring) handpiece

### What did you do for your most recent staff Christmas night out?

We went to an award-winning restaurant that's only a walk away from the practice. We had a really nice meal and then, as has become a tradition, I dressed up as Santa and presented the team with their presents.

### ABOUT THE PRACTICE

#### How is your practice laid out—what's the workflow like?

Oakdale is a five-surgery practice. Treatment rooms are on the ground and first floors, with the educational area on the top floor.

#### Do you play music in the practice? If so, what do you play?

We've just installed Spotify in the waiting areas and we have a Bang & Olufsen Beosound 2 speaker, which has become a bit of a talking point for our patients. It looks more like a sculpture than a speaker.

#### How do you market your practice?

Word-of-mouth is our biggest source for new patients.

#### What are you most proud of about your practice?

My team. There is no way that we would be able to do this without their input. ■



set up with crazy rules, which means paying out against claims is cheaper and easier than contesting them.

### What would you like to see change in dentistry in the next 10 years?

The NHS has got big funding problems and although this may make me unpopular, I genuinely don't believe that dentistry is as important as some of the life-saving work that our medical colleagues do. Given that there's a limited pot of money, I'd like NHS dentistry to be confined to those who really need it—perhaps those who are exempt now. If everybody else is then private, it will make the game a lot better; patients will rightly expect more, because they'll be able to shop around, and that will improve our standards as a profession.

Dentists will also benefit because we'll no longer be constrained by the bizarre fee structure and inordinate amount of red tape that comes with NHS contracts. All we need is a government that is brave enough to do it.

### Describe the most successful or rewarding experience in your professional life.

Having *The Smiling Dentist* published and being able to present a check to Bridge2Aid.

### Any interests outside of dentistry?

I love spending time with my family and we often go to the gym together. It's our way of spending time together and unwinding.

### What's your favourite film?

I love all things *Star Wars* and I really like the Marvel films as well.

### ABOUT THE TEAM:

#### Do you work with other dentists?

#### What interests/skills do they have?

Dr. Bayan Al Sarraj, a specialist oral surgeon, has an interest in implant dentistry. He accepts referrals for implant treatment from all over Leicester. Dr. Josh Virdee has an interest in minimally invasive smile makeovers. Dr. Neena Amin takes a holistic approach to patient care. Dr. Mo Issa is a specialist periodontist, and Mark Foxall is a clinical dental technician.

#### How many other members do you have in your dental team, and what are their roles?

We have a team of 20 fantastic people, including Neil Buklavs (our dental therapist), our team of dental nurses, front-of-house staff, and a management team led by my wife, Rumana.

#### What are the most important things about your team?

They share our values and they really strive for excellence.

#### Do you have team meetings? What format do they take?

We try to have regular 'buzz'-type meetings that allow us to keep close contact with everyone. We also have a couple of WhatsApp groups—one for serious, and one for banter. These have been great because they allow us to keep constant communication if things are wrong and rectify them, so that we're not wasting time in meetings talking about these kinds of things.