

Name: Nikkita Madhu

Age: 21

University: Dental intern at Ajman University of Science and Technology

Hometown: Bangalore, India

Area of residence:

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

How would you sum yourself up in just three words? I like pushing my limits!

I usually get up each morning at 6 a.m., often by force, and live just 30 minutes away, give or take. I live with my mum, dad and teenage sister. On weekdays I usually eat whatever I can put together in less than 5 minutes, but if I'm feeling adventurous it's PB&J on the road. I travel to university by car; I usually drive my sister to school and my mum to work before heading to university, so the morning commute is almost never uneventful.

Because I'm enrolled in an internship program, I engage in complete practical work. I spend half my week at a screening clinic providing oral examinations and emergency dental care for walk-in patients, and the other half planning and carrying out dental treatment procedures for scheduled patients.

A large part of this profession involves interacting and communicating with people, understanding what they need and providing them with the right dental solutions. Being able to do that successfully is satisfying and something I've enjoyed doing in the few years I've practiced dentistry. But if I were to pick what really drew me in, it's the science and structure behind a health care profession. It's being able to understand how different biological processes work together and trying to figure out the how and why of a disease or pathology, whatever it may be.

My favourite areas of study are prosthodontics, because every case is unique and requires a different perspective, and endodontics, because who doesn't like a good (or in some cases terrifying) challenge? It's been an incredible experience this year, applying what I've learned over the past five years in clinical situations, and in the process learning even more. The most challenging aspects of this experience? As much as I like interacting with patients, there are always those who refuse to listen to reason.



I like to keep my options open, but if I were given the choice between pursuing a career in research or in business, I'd pick the former. There's room for improvement in the dental curriculum about managing a practice. Even if that isn't every student's career goal, knowledge itself is power. I have begun giving serious thought to my longer-term ambitions and I want to pursue a master's degree in a specialty I'm most passionate about, although the jury's still out on which specialty that would be, and to contribute to the dental research community.

I've been more active on the volunteering scene recently, especially now that Ajman University has started organizing oral health campaigns. Last year, I got to join a group of volunteers and start a campaign that provides free dental examinations every month to people of low socioeconomic backgrounds. Being able to contribute to my community is important to me, whether it's spreading oral health awareness or reaching out to high-risk communities with limited access to dental resources, so I'm excited to see where this goes! ■