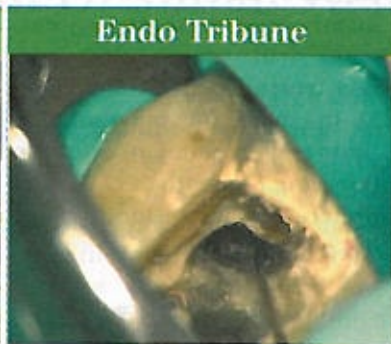


# ENDO TRIBUNE



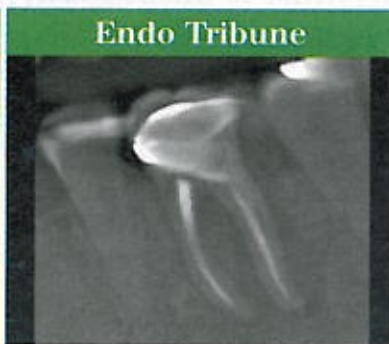
**Wave One**  
An interview with Julian Webber

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**Retreatment case**  
A presentation by Dr Konstantinos Kalogeropoulos

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**Radio limits**  
Daniel Flynn talks radiography

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## The fallout from Channel 4's *Dispatches*

Michael Sultan talks television

If you wanted an example of "cats among pigeons" in dentistry, the recent Channel 4 *Dispatches* documentary, *The Truth about Your Dentist*, has certainly got feathers flying. Undercover reporters were sent to identify problems facing both dentists and patients, particularly in NHS dentistry where the pressures of time, money and contracts are enormous and according to the programme's presenter, Sam Lister, "the fundamentals of good NHS care and full disclosure are being badly compromised."

One of the undercover reporters needed a root canal treatment for an infected molar tooth and although an NHS patient, he was encouraged to go privately. By all the dentists he saw he was advised that the only option for safe and successful care was to pay far more than the NHS rate.

### Focus on failure

The programme raised many issues - and more than a few hackles too - but a TV documentary such as this will inevitably focus on professionals failing patients and patients being exploited. However, the inference that viewers might have taken that referral to a specialist endodontist is because the GDP is too lazy, insufficiently skilled or fee-focused, is simply wrong. Endodontics is difficult, time consuming and poorly remunerated. Suc-

cessful outcomes may involve multiple visits and hours in the chair and the equipment we use for greater efficiency - rotary NiTi instruments, new obturation materials and clamps for instance really add to the cost of a procedure so I have every sympathy with very conscientious NHS dentists doing a good job within financial constraints.

### Extension

Endodontic specialists act as an extension of the referring dental team to provide quick and precise treat-

ment. Patients presenting with severe pain from pulpitis often need urgent attention and the skills and knowledge of a specialist will usually be the most rapid route to returning patients to dentists free of pain, comfortable and confident they have received quality treatment.

*'I have every sympathy with very conscientious NHS dentists doing a good job within financial constraints'*

It is entirely at the dentist's discretion as to when a case is suitable for referral and can range from diagnosis to checking the endodontic status of teeth prior to crown and bridgework. A special-

ist endodontist will be familiar with anxious patients who may find the very thought of a root canal treatment terrifying. In my experience, despite understandable apprehension, patients are invariably pleased to be referred to a professional who can efficiently sort out the problem.

Similarly, most referring dentists are delighted to have a resource that specialises in root canal treatments, as procedures can hugely disrupt the daily schedule and are often stressful, slow and labori-

ous. Dealing with anaesthetic problems and other challenging issues such as hot pulp cases and re-treatments will also have an impact on your dental team, practice and other patients, so referring ensures that your management of time is optimised, while your patients receive immediate care and excellent results from an experienced specialist. Why do a difficult endo yourself when you would be much happier and more confident doing the crowns? Dentists

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