



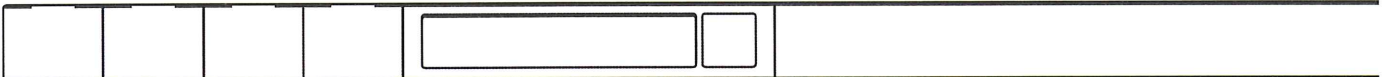
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EndoCare

Getting to the root of dental pain

Don't let the past shape the present

For many years I have been a very keen member of Alpha Omega. This is an organisation that was founded in the United States with its primary mission is to fight against discrimination in the dental profession wherever it occurs. They provide outstanding postgraduate courses as well as being a real fraternity. I have often wondered whether the origins of the group was anachronistic.

So it was with great sadness that I heard recently about a particularly unpleasant episode - the details of which are closely on here. The overall gist, however, was that patients in the UK are inherently racist and any practitioner within a certain ethnic bracket should be prepared to encounter negative attitudes.

Is this true? I think not; it may have been 30-40 years ago, but certainly not today. When I first started in London I found many practitioners refused to hire black dental nurses. They maintained that they did not want to be racist, but because their patients would simply not cope with such an arrangement.

But this has changed. Time has moved on. The people of the UK are open-minded, tolerant and accepting. I have personal experience of this: I am from a Jewish family, my father's first language is Arabic. There have been patients who, after being referred to my practice and seeing my name on the door, would ask: "And who are you?"

In those days, I think a lot of people just shrugged off this disparaging attitude and grew thick skin. They did not, and, in doing so, almost condoned it. I am still guilty that I did not take a stronger stance earlier on as we let it. Thankfully, when those individuals did later question my efficacy as a practitioner based upon my ethnicity, I took a zero tolerance approach and simply suggested they find treatment elsewhere. I do not think any practitioner should let a patient that they are competent, despite their name and ethnicity.

Fortunately, these days are over. I so rarely hear remarks about ethnicity or gender in this profession,

incident came to light, I was deeply saddened.

Dentistry already receives an often terrible press. Dredging up past bitterness and bad memories of a t put behind us is unnecessary and disappointing. Just consider the intake by our dental schools! The dra lambasted difference would be spinning in their graves if they knew, I'm certain - but what does that r to be enriched by such diversity and our patients are open-minded and tolerant, with their feet placed in the past.

For further information please call EndoCare on 020 7224 0999

Or visit www.endocare.co.uk

Dr Michael Sultan BDS MSc DFO FICD is a Specialist in Endodontics and the Clinical Director of Endo Bristol University in 1986. He worked as a general dental practitioner for 5 years before commenc hospital, London. He completed his MSc in Endodontics in 1993 and worked as an in-house Endodo before setting up in Harley St, London in 2000. He was admitted onto the specialist register in End lectured extensively to postgraduate dental groups as well as lecturing on Endodontic courses at Ei London. He has been involved with numerous dental groups and has been chairman of the Alpha O 2008 he became clinical director of EndoCare, a group of specialist practices.

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