

A specialist referral centre: a two-way relationship, it's all about sharing

Wail Girgis from Devonshire House explains how it's not only patient care their specialists share with their referring dentists

Wail Girgis

Specialist Prosthodontist and Clinical Director at Devonshire House



We all know that when trying to find a specialist in any field, either as a patient or as a referrer, it goes without saying that we all look for great patient care, a fabulous reputation, lots of experience and fantastic facilities. At Devonshire House in Cambridge our shared patient care with our referring dentists is of utmost importance to us, however, our support for our colleagues in general practice goes way beyond that.

The relationships we have with our referring dentists through both our practice and lab are nurtured by sharing expertise and education which has proved to be more important than ever during the pandemic.

Shared patient care

As a specialist referral centre, it is a privilege to offer patients a broader range of treatment options using a collaborative approach to patient care with our referring dentists. Our partnered approach to treatment varies according to the requirements of each referring dentist.

We work closely with our referring dentists on many levels. Many refer asking us to treat their patients completely; however, some may want to be part of the patient dental journey. With this, we offer to see patients with their dentists present to discuss and plan the case then share the work in a timely manner. They use this as an education pathway too and some dentists have now trained to refer the surgical part of the treatment and then they restore.

We have many different specialities at Devonshire House and are willing to share our knowledge and experience to support our referring dentists to allow them to treat their patients with confidence and predictability.

Some practices utilise our full range of specialist services and prefer us to provide the entire treatment

The partnership with Devonshire House has further enhanced the standard of care and reputation in my own practice. The specialists have always been extremely supportive and this was further highlighted during the closure of dental practices during the pandemic



Wail mentoring a dental colleague at her practice in Wales

solution for their patients. Other colleagues simply refer patients for CBCT scans or OPGs or even just refer work to our dental laboratory. We have also found that some just require advice over the telephone or help treatment planning by visiting our specialists to discuss cases. Whatever the nature of the referral, the key to shared dentistry is good communication, trust and transparency to result in seamless patient care.

Sharing clinical expertise

Sharing our clinical expertise by treating patients is of course our prime focus and this goes far beyond looking after the patients who are referred to us. We actively encourage dentists to accompany patients to Devonshire House to observe their treatment and next month we are looking forward to welcoming dentists from some of our fellow Riverdale practices from the North East.

As part of our commitment to education and sharing knowledge, we assist our network of dental colleagues with case consultations offering advice on scan interpretation and treatment scenarios. We also publish weekly tips for dentists via our social media platforms.

I am fortunate to be involved in dental education in many ways including through the courses that we run at Devonshire House, as a clinical centre for Smiletube, VSS Academy, Eastman Dental Institute and by lecturing worldwide. However, my favourite way of sharing expertise is by mentoring

dentists at their own practices for implant procedures.

Helping dentists embark on a career in Implantology by mentoring them in their own familiar environment builds confidence for both the dentist and their nurse allowing everyone to be hands on and feel fully supported throughout the procedure. It really is rewarding to know you've helped a dentist progress into new treatment areas. In many cases, this just adds to the continued relationship as the referring dentist starts to treat their own straight forward implant cases whilst sending the more complicated ones to Devonshire House.

Practice management support and sharing procedures

For Devonshire House, it is not just about looking after patients and sharing clinical knowledge. As specialist dentists the relationship we have with referring dentists and practices goes way beyond just sharing patient care.

Over the years we have had the honour of working alongside many fantastic local practices and have been glad to help out in times of need with the loan of equipment such as implant drill kits and portable suction units.

Our support team have also been happy to share their expertise and our systems and protocols. It is this willingness to help out whenever we can and to go above and beyond that has helped us to build the strong collaborative relationships that we have with many of our referring dentists.

Never has this been more important than during the pandemic when we were all suddenly forced into a situation where we had to reinvent the delivery of dentistry. We were glad to support our network of dental professionals by sharing our standard operating procedures and risk assessments which was greatly welcomed by many colleagues.

Having trained some of our own staff as face fit mask testers, we were delighted to be able to offer this service to the profession and over a period of three months provided mask fit tests for nearly 300 colleagues to help them get back up and running safely as soon as possible.

Sharing in Riverdale

Since joining Riverdale Healthcare in April, we have been collaborating with fellow practices in the North East sharing our digital expertise and refining practice management systems and processes. We are delighted to be part of a growing like-minded group that is passionate about quality dentistry.

RIVERDALE HEALTHCARE IS an ambitious dental group with exciting plans for further expansion. If you would like to find out how joining Riverdale could benefit you and your practice, Chris Aylward, chief investment officer, would love to hear from you.

www.riverdalehealthcare.com

www.devonshirehousedental.co.uk