

## Alumni profiles - Zehra Yonel

Bachelor of Dental Surgery, 2011

Restorative Senior House Officer, Eastman Dental Hospital

“The quality of the course and the teaching that I received as an undergraduate became very apparent to me...”



### Where are you working now and what are you doing?

I am currently working within the Restorative dentistry department of the Eastman Dental Hospital as a restorative SHO. My role includes general restorative duties (Prosthodontics, Endodontics, and Periodontics), participation in consultant new patient clinics, working within the Oncology multi-disciplinary team and working within the Hypodontia multi-disciplinary team. I also treat emergencies within the department and have gained experience in the restoration of implants.

### How has your career has developed since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

Since graduating from the University of Birmingham my career has had a number of interesting and stimulating developments. I was awarded my first choice dental foundation year 1 (DF1) practice within my first choice deanery. My success in this recruitment process was largely attributable to the great quality of teaching, preparation and support I was given as an undergraduate while studying at the University Of Birmingham School Of Dentistry. I spent a year in a brilliant general dental practice situated in Selly Oak. The staff in the practice within which I worked were hugely supportive of me and my long-term career goals and my personal development into a more confident competent practitioner. Following a successful DF1 year, where I won a number of prizes including the Outstanding DF1 in the West Midlands Deanery, I decided I wanted to experience working in a secondary care setting. I have always been interested in restorative dentistry and I applied to the London Deanery and was fortuitous to achieve the post I wanted within the Eastman Dental Hospital Restorative department. I very much doubt the success I have achieved following my degree would have been possible without the good grounding and core teaching I received whilst I was an undergraduate.

### What is the best thing about the job you are doing now?

There are many aspects of my job that I enjoy, including:-

- Meeting new people
- Working as part of a larger team
- No two days are the same - there is a huge amount of variety
- You genuinely feel like you are making a positive impact of patients lives
- Working within multi-disciplinary teams – Oncology MDT – You are able to work with colleagues from a range of departments (Oncology / dietician / hygienists / therapists / Oral-Maxillofacial surgeons)
- Hypodontia multi-disciplinary team – You are able to work with patients in a broad age group from young children to adults. The transformation in the patient's appearance is hugely rewarding and the positive impact you can make to these young peoples' psycho-social well-being is hugely gratifying.
- The work is both mentally and technically stimulating (especially when planning complex treatment cases and trying to overcome certain difficulties – e.g. Fabrication of dentures in patients with very limited mouth opening – you have to think outside the box and adapt to the situation and try different techniques!)
- The research and literature is really interesting – it's an ever evolving profession with new techniques, materials and technology constantly being developed.

### Why did you originally apply to do Dentistry at Birmingham?

I instantly fell in love with the campus and the city. Everyone I met was inclusive and friendly. I liked the atmosphere on the university campus. When I was shown around the dental hospital everyone I met greeted me with a smile and was welcoming. I made up my mind there and then that it was definitely the place for me. I just felt really comfortable from the first moment I stepped on to the campus.

### What did you think were the best points of the Dental Surgery degree and the University?

I don't have one negative thing to say about my time spent in Birmingham. The quality of the course and the teaching that I received as an undergraduate became very apparent to me upon qualifying and meeting my peers who graduated from different institutions who often complained of gaps in their learning and less positive experiences.

At Birmingham I got the feeling that people actually cared not just about producing technically “good-dentists” but producing caring, conscientious healthcare professionals. The support I received from the staff was exemplary and is something I will always remember and be grateful for.

I made some amazing friends and had a brilliant social life, in addition to educational experience. I feel that during the course I matured and developed as an individual. Some of my personal highlights were the elective module where I had the opportunity to travel to Australia and study forensic dentistry at the University of Melbourne.

### What advice would you give to current students studying on the course?

Make the most of the opportunities you have and the resources available to you (e.g. the dental course and the experience of the staff members and supervisors.) You have the opportunity to give yourself the best foundations and grounding to make your transition from student to healthcare professional as smooth as possible, it's vital that you make the most of this!

It is also really important to remember that you have to enjoy what you do and have fun, socialise with friends and take part in as many activities as you can while you have access to all the societies, sports clubs and organisations the university has to offer. Basically, work hard, have fun and make the most of all your opportunities!

### How did you grow as a person by studying at University? Did it change your life in any way?

My time spent at Birmingham taught me so much and I have become a much more confident individual who is more focused on my career goals. The Dentistry course

taught me to become more empathetic and enhanced my desire to achieve. I feel that I have developed greatly, matured significantly and I am proud of what I have been able to achieve thus far in my career. I now look forward to the many exciting opportunities that I hope await me in my future career.

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