



Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)  
The Royal College of Surgeons of England

## ***Team in Practice*** **Guidelines for Authors of scenario-based articles**

*Team in Practice* is the FGDP(UK)'s quarterly educational journal for dental care professionals (DCPs). Its aim is to provide team training and continuing professional development (CPD) for DCPs.

Please note that the FGDP(UK) is a non-political organisation, and *Team in Practice* is an academic journal. Though the format is different, the academic standard expected is the same as any other peer-reviewed journal. All articles must therefore be written from an objective scientific viewpoint, and must be supported by evidence.

Generic drug names should be used throughout, where applicable. If you do mention any proprietary products in your article, you must include a statement of any commercial interests (or absence thereof) you may have.

Please be sure to refer to institutions by their full and correct name (as many institutions have long names, this may not be the name by which it is most commonly known). Institutions are often interrelated – please make clear which is which (for example, it is incorrect to say that "Dr Smith qualified as a dentist at Guy's Hospital" as the degree is awarded by the university and not the hospital).

You **must** inform us if your article has been published in, or submitted for publication to, any other publisher. If your work has been published elsewhere, then you may be in breach of copyright by submitting it to *Team in Practice*, and may be personally liable (this may apply even if the article was exclusively your own original work).

### **Sources**

It is part of the job of a writer to carry out their own research, **and this includes giving all references in full**. Books and other publications must include the author, publisher, and place and year of publication. Journal articles must include the author's name and the full citation. Articles with incomplete references will not be published – please do not insert messages into your article instructing us to go to the library and look it up for you! Remember that it is easier and more accurate for you to do your own

references than for anyone else to guess them. As inaccurate references may leave the Faculty open to legal repercussions (either because of misinformation or breach of copyright), strictly no exceptions can be made on this point. A guide to referencing can be found at <http://www.fgdp.org.uk/pdf/vancouver.pdf>.

Care should be taken to ensure that citations are used correctly. Any statement based on the research of another party should be accompanied by a reference, and if quoting another author verbatim, this must be indicated in the text. **Please note that it is not acceptable to cut and paste text written by other authors.** Even if the other author's work is not original research, this will constitute plagiarism and the article will not be published.

It will be much appreciated if you can supply any suitable images you may have. These need not be posed: in many cases simple scenes such as staff talking at a reception desk will suffice. We will of course credit all photos where requested. **Please make sure that you have permission to reproduce images, where required and that, if applicable, patient consent has been obtained.**

Even though the main focus of the article is rarely clinical, dental images are very helpful to illustrate the surrounding clinical issues. As long as the images do not contain the patient's name (or similar information which can be used to identify them), this is not a breach of confidentiality and can be done without permission from the patient (though you may need permission from the operator who took the picture).

All images should be high-resolution (300 dots per inch or higher) and should be supplied as **separate** JPEG or TIF files. Please do not embed images within Word documents (or any other document) as they are not suitable for professional printing.

## **Scenario-based articles**

The scenario-based articles describe a scene from general dental practice, typically in which patient care has been unsatisfactory. This is followed by an analysis of what went wrong and advice on how the situation could be rectified, with a strong focus on best practice and constructive criticism. This is reinforced by the CPD quiz, which tests readers on what they have learned from the scenarios presented.

This unique format is responsible for much of *Team in Practice's* continued appeal, so rather than a glib guide to what not to do (or worse, a peevish list of workaday gripes), the focus of the journal should always be firmly on team communication and peer learning.

## **Content**

Be sure that the scenario adds something to the message of the article. If you are unsure, contact the editorial team to discuss the format.

*Team in Practice* is about the dental team working together. It is therefore important that the interactions between the characters should not invite distinctions between DCP groups, or between DCPs and dentists. Most readers will read your article in the spirit in which it is intended, but a few will not, and the article should be written with the latter group in mind.

The resolution of the piece must involve a substantive point of standards and/or guidance which is of general application, and should suggest a way to avoid the problem in future. This is particularly important if the story is about an isolated incident: there is little for the reader to learn if the article is about a one-off lapse of memory.

There is a tendency for scenario articles to centre around DCPs making mistakes, and dentists correcting them. While this is not per se unacceptable, remember that DCPs are professionals who are motivated by the needs of patients, not the approval of dentists. In other words, do not scold them! If you are unsure about the tone of your copy, it may help to imagine reading it aloud at a team meeting in your own practice, and imagine how your own colleagues might react.

Remember, the characters represent your readers and are presented as role models, so their conduct should not be negligent, as this may suggest that this is typical practice. The characters will probably make mistakes, but be sure that they are ones that a reasonably conscientious professional may make (such as misunderstandings or oversights, rather than outright misconduct).

### **Extraneous details**

Don't introduce unnecessary characters. More than four named characters is probably too many. If a person's name is only used two or three times, they should probably remain nameless.

Any background information given about the characters should be directly relevant to the subject matter of *Team in Practice*. It may, for example, be helpful to point out that a character has just returned from a career break, during which they worked part-time as a dental hygienist while studying, as this illustrates to readers that this is an available career option. By way of contrast, many first drafts include background information which is not relevant (remember that the scenario is supposed to be generic). Frequent examples include:

- time (eg. that it was a Tuesday);
- location (eg. that the practice is six miles from the centre of Ipswich);
- character history (eg. that Audrey had worked at the practice for 12 years);
- character traits (eg. "Steve is always miserable");
- over-exposition (eg. "John wasn't around at the time was because he had to rush off to pick up the children from school near Tiverton 10 miles away, which his wife would normally have done except that the road was blocked because of a freak weather incident..." etc)

Details like this will always be edited out before publication.

## English

It is preferred that the article be written in the past tense (the conclusion can be in the present if this is consistent). Introductory paragraphs may use the historic present, but if you are unsure what this means then stick to past tense.

Write in the third person as this will give a more objective feel to your article. Do not use the words "I", "we" or "you".

It can be tempting to use generalisations to make sentences appear more authoritative than they are. These are usually meaningless. Be sure not to use phrases such as 'It is known that...', 'It is estimated that...', and 'Studies show...' unless they are backed up by evidence with references.

Try to avoid colloquialisms. There may be some exceptions, but as a general rule, "inverted commas" imply an admission that you have used the wrong word, and should be avoided.

Where possible, use vocabulary which is gender-non-specific (eg. "fire officer" rather than "fireman"). Use the impersonal "they" and "them" rather than "he/she" and "him/her".

Many readers dislike the use of the possessive to indicate the relationship between dentists and DCPs, eg. "Rachel is Paul's dental nurse." Rearrange the sentence, eg. "Rachel is a dental nurse working in Paul's clinic."

## Finally...

Please be sure to include your full name, title, job, and qualification letters.

Please also include a suitable photograph of yourself to accompany the article, in JPEG or TIF format.

*If you are unsure about any aspects of Team in Practice's editorial policy, please feel free to contact Dave O'Malley on 020 7869 6771 or at [domalley@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:domalley@rcseng.ac.uk). Alternatively, if your query is of a technical or clinical nature, please contact Ken Eaton on 01233 813 585 or at [keaton@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:keaton@rcseng.ac.uk).*

DOM and KE  
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