

Did You Know?



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In the UK female dentists are shying away from implant-based specialties

By Adela Laverick

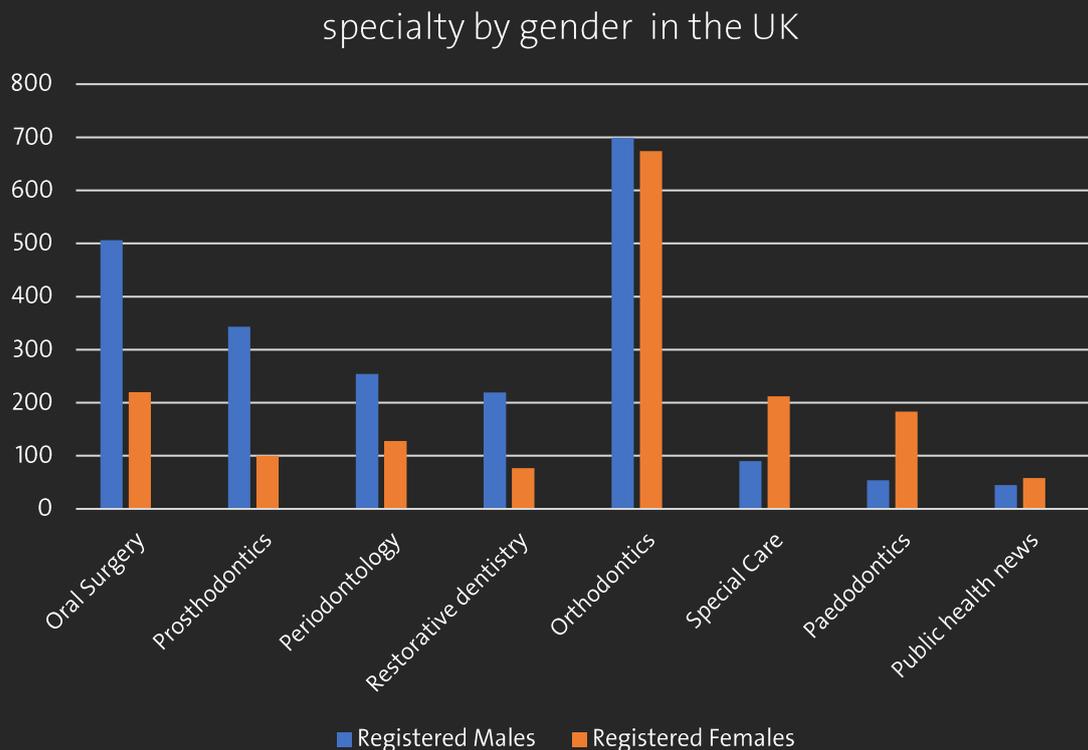
In the UK female dentists are shying away from implant based specialties – and not just from oral surgery. There is also surprisingly low female representation on all restorative based UK specialist lists and within the implant related specialist organisations.

Current Demographic Trends in the UK

In the UK young women are choosing to become dentists and are not put off by the initial 5 year training or high entrance requirements. As of the end of 2017, 49% of dentists registered in the UK were female, and between the years of 2012 and 2017 an average of 55.5% of new registrations were female (1) – hence demonstrating a healthy interest in dentistry as a profession from young women.

“Women are not necessarily put off by post graduate training per se, but do seem to be put off by the implant related specialities”

Preferred Specialties: Orthodontic, Paediatric & Special Care Dentistry

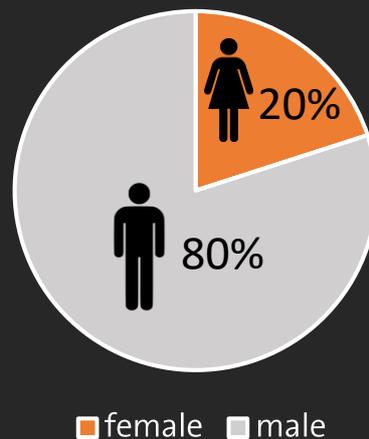


However, this strong female presence is not being represented at the specialist level. UK women appear to be choosing not to specialise in implant-related fields, including oral surgery and all restorative based specialties. In contrast, some specialties are still attracting women: orthodontics has an equal split amongst males and females, and there is a female bias in paediatric dentistry and special care dentistry (Table 1). So UK women are not necessarily put off by postgraduate training per se, but do seem to be put off by the implant related specialties. This implies that women are choosing to avoid the implant related specialties, which is a concern we would like to understand better and start to address.

Table1: Comparison of male and female representation on UK specialist lists (numbers from GDC register, May 2018)

Few Women Are on the Podium as Conference Speakers

The lack of women in the field of implantology is also obvious within the related professional organisations. At five recent implant-related UK conferences, female representation as speakers was worryingly low: an average of only 20%. The UK is clearly lacking female role models in this field, and this may be a barrier for young women considering their post graduate career options.



At five recent implant-related UK conferences

Why should we be concerned?

Female dentists are missing out on one of the most rewarding areas of dentistry, and in turn, the profession itself is missing out on all that women could contribute. We are also concerned that patients could be at risk if female dentists do not have the knowledge or experience to appropriately discuss implant treatment options with their patients, or to maintain or monitor patients that have had implant treatment provided elsewhere.

Encouraging Women To Be Present in the Field of Implant Dentistry in the UK

As yet we do not know why women are avoiding implant related specialities, and clearly more in-depth research is required. We need to identify whether women are making an informed decision at the postgraduate level, whether their career choices are being negatively influenced by a lack of female role models in the field, or whether a lack of understanding about what implant dentistry involves is to blame. What seems obvious is that UK women need more support: both to be encouraged to enter this field and then to contribute fully to the field of implant dentistry.

(1): Numbers sourced from. Published GDC Annual Report/Accounts.