

Dental implantology: a team sport

Dental practice partners Sanjay Chopra and Philip Andrew Hayter from the Highland View Dental Surgery in Essex speak to Versha Miyanger about their successful partnership and their inspiring work



VM: Can you both tell me a bit about your backgrounds?

SC/PH: For the first few years since qualifying in 1990, I spent more time in Hospital Oral Surgery, whereas Philip was mainly in general Dental practice. We both worked as associates in a large family practice before starting up our own Oral Surgery and GA/Sedation referral practice in 1995. We feel that these varied experiences and skill sets complimented each other. We are both married (my wife is Sarita and Philip's wife is Caryl) and we have three kids each and enjoy very active professional and family lives, particularly in the Alps in both winter and summer. Skiing several times a year is certainly a very refreshing and invigorating break from dentistry and well recommended!

VM: How did you build your business and practice?

SC/PH: We started both of our practices from scratch, which gave us an excellent chance to have a purpose designed practice and to test out our business and marketing abilities. We were lucky to be in the right place at the right time, when in 1995 we opened our first practice in Leigh-on-Sea. We were also very fortunate to have the Late Professor Poswillo officially open our first practice in Leigh-on-Sea. In an official letter he later described our practices as 'two of the best Surgical Dentistry clinics in the South East'. Sarita (also a Specialist in Oral Surgery) initially worked there part-time, waiting for referrals, while completing her MSc in Children's Dentistry. Meanwhile we were working as associates in our previous practice in order to pay the bills of the new practice. This built up very quickly and within three years we opened our second site in Hornchurch. Both sites are now full-time large multi-surgery practices offering a wide range of dental specialities on referral.

VM: Are you completely restricted to implants, or do you practise other types of dentistry?

SC/PH: Probably about 70% of our time is spent with dental implants. As specialists in oral surgery, we also carry out a full range of surgical dentistry on referral (with sedation if necessary, which we administer ourselves), and general dentistry on our own patients. I think it is very healthy not to spend the whole week on 'high-end' complex cases, and feel that mixing in some simple routine and surgical dentistry keeps us sane! A couple of afternoons off a week also helps us stay fully charged when treating patients.

VM: Do the implant patients come from referrals?

SC/PH: Most of the implant cases are referred from other local dentists, although having our own regular and new patients generates a good amount of implant work. Obviously, all referred patients are discharged back to their dentist after treatment. This has always been a very strict rule written in stone, enabling dentists to refer with confidence.

VM: How long have you been working in implant dentistry and what systems do you use?

SC/PH: We both originally started placing and restoring implants in 1995 after attending the Branemark course- it was virtually the only course around! We also attended several other short courses. We always believed in regularly doing cases on joint lists, something which has since been described as 'peer mentoring'. This has been an excellent learning experience, and we still do many of the complex grafts and full arch cases jointly. It may seem financially inefficient but we have found it to be quite the opposite. Patients also like it as they feel they are getting 'two specialists for the price of one'. Since starting with implants we tried out



People in focus

FACT FILE

Name of practice: Highland View Dental Surgery

www.highlandview.co.uk

Location: Two practices in Essex – Hornchurch and Leigh-on-Sea

Patient mix: 100% Private.

Brief description of the practice:

The Highland View Dental Surgery, led by Sanjay Chopra and Philip Hayter, was established in 1995 and has since expanded to two state of the art private specialist referral practices across Essex.

Our three full-time specialist Oral surgeons, Sanjay, Philip and Sarita accept referral for Surgical Dentistry, Dental Implants, Sedation and Cone Beam CT Scans. Our team also includes an Endodontist, Periodontist, Consultant Orthodontist, experienced dental surgeons, hygienists and support staff to enable us to offer a wide range of services. Please see www.highlandview.co.uk for further details.

Staff:

Two partners: Sanjay Chopra and Philip Hayter (Both specialists in oral surgery)

Sanjay's wife (Specialist Associate): Sarita Chopra- Specialist in Oral Surgery

Helen Davison: GDP Associate

Gan Dharrie-Maharaj: Endodontist

Nami Farkhondeh: Periodontist

Ama Johal: Consultant Orthodontist

Practice Managers: David Gurney, Claire Ireland

Receptionists: Claire Treadway, Deborah Finlay

Dental Nurses : Kath Bailey, Kathy Willtshire, Michelle

McSweeney, Charlotte
Myers, Jenny
Holborn.

Days a week in the practice:

Five

Treatments offered:

Referrals accepted for Specialist Oral Surgery, Implants, Sedation, Endodontics, Orthodontics, Cone Beam CT Scans (I-Cat) and full range of routine dentistry under LA or Sedation.

Big capital equipment/technology:

Full set up for Surgical dentistry, sedation. I-Cat CT scanner, Cerec 3 CAD/CAM machine

Postgraduate education

Sanjay Chopra is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (FDS RCS) and both Sanjay and Philip have the Diploma in implant dentistry (Dip Implant Dent RCS Eng). Both are Registered specialists in Oral Surgery. They are tutors and lecturers for the FDGP Diploma in Implant Dentistry.

Sarita Chopra also has the FDS RCS, an MSc in Children's Dentistry and a Diploma in Sedation for Dentistry (Dip D Sed) from Guy's Hospital. She is also a Registered Specialist in Oral Surgery.

Practice ethos:

Our continued aim is to provide a prompt first class referral services for a wide range of specialities in the best interest of the patient under one roof.



various systems but now we predominantly use Astratech or Ankylos. We still have the equipment ready to work with other implants, and only last week we needed to restore a Branemark implant placed by a dentist in Belgium as the patient had moved to Essex. We feel it is very important to learn and teach implant dentistry generically based on features rather than on a specific system.

VM: Why did you decide to concentrate on implants?

SC/PH: We quickly became the established haven for many anxious and phobic patients across Essex, many of whom needed multiple extractions following years of neglect. Once we had managed to get these patients comfortable with seeing dentists and dentally fit, we had a huge pool of patients who could benefit from the improving technology of dental implants. At the time it seemed like a natural progression, as the patients really needed something better than dentures, and we have always felt that bridges could be quite destructive in some cases.

VM: What training have you undertaken apart from your University education?

SC: Whilst working and training in Hospital Oral Surgery, I attained my Fellowship from the Royal College of Surgeons (Oral Surgery Speciality). Philip also attended various other hospital and practice based courses

as well as gaining extensive practical experience in Oral Surgery. Sanjay, Philip, Sarita and I were registered as Specialists in Surgical Dentistry (and later Oral Surgery) soon after the Specialist lists were established. Although we both continued to attend various basic and advanced implant courses in the UK and abroad, when the opportunity arose to learn more about implants on a structured course such as the FGDP Diploma in Implant Dentistry at the Royal College of Surgeons, we both jumped to it. We joined in 2003 and completed the course in 2004 on the first cohort. That was a real turning point in our careers, when we really felt that we were planning and treating patients to a predictable standard to the best of our ability. We both owe a lot to Ashok Sethi and Naresh Sharma for the excellent teaching. They pioneered this course keeping the patients best interest in mind. We still continue to attend other courses and now both teach on the Diploma course at the FGDP, where I am also an examiner.

Other areas of training included attending basic and advanced sedation courses, Oral surgery courses and various other dental and management courses. Regular updates also form part of our agenda.

VM: You are both SAAD trained sedationists and members of the Dental Sedation Teachers Group. What are your views on conscious sedation in dentistry

People in focus

and do you find that patients request this or do you recommend this to your patients?

SC/PH: Conscious sedation is an excellent adjunct to any surgical treatment, particularly on nervous patients. If carried out correctly, it is a very safe procedure, arguably safer than LA alone on certain groups of patients. Although many patients do request sedation, we also offer and recommend it where appropriate, but discuss all the options carefully. Since Sarita passed her Diploma in Conscious Sedation at Guy's (KCL), we are planning to launch new sedation courses in the near future as we feel that there is a need for more training courses with clinical observation and supervision.

If used correctly by appropriately trained teams, sedation could and should make hospital GA almost obsolete for most dento-alveolar surgery. This in turn would free up huge amounts of hospital time and resources to deal with cases which really need a hospital consultant led oral and maxillofacial surgery service- but that argument is for another day.

VM: What is the most satisfying aspect of your work?

SC/PH: When you see a dental phobic patient walk out smiling and delighted with their treatment, whether it was a full mouth of implants or a simple scale and polish, it makes your day. When they tell all their friends about you, it makes your week! Treating anxious patients is certainly a most satisfying task, although often quite challenging. One other very satisfying moment is when you hear that lovely 'ting' noise tapping an implant, when you know that it is well integrated!

VM: Professionally, what are you most proud of?

SC/PH: We are all very proud of the respect and confidence our teams have been shown from our colleagues in general dental practice. A specialist referral practice would be nothing without the referred patients and we have a long list of very supportive dentists to thank for putting their confidence in our services. We are also very pleased that nearly all of the patients who approach us directly have come on recommendation rather than via our adverts. However, we still do advertise as it helps patients and dentists find us, but hopefully we are not relying too heavily on it.

VM: What about your practice do you think is unique?

SC/PH: The atmosphere of good teamwork from all the excellent staff and colleagues makes our practice feel special. There are very few practices that are able to offer such a wide range of specialities with such competent support staff under one roof. Since opening in 1995 we have been continually expanding our range of referral services, which now include oral surgery, sedation, dental implants, endodontics, periodontics, orthodontics and more recently Cone Beam CT scanning. This enables us to take a multi-disciplinary approach for patients who require it, without the need to be sent elsewhere. Since we have launched our Implant and Sedation courses, seminars and teaching facilities, we hope this will add even more to our range of activity. One course in particular which has gained immense interest is our forthcoming year course covering the syllabus and helping prepare delegates for the new Diploma in Implant Dentistry examination at the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

VM: What has been your biggest challenge?

SC/PH: In 2003 we decided to relocate our Leigh-on-Sea practice to a brand new purpose designed site. Closing the old place on a Friday afternoon with a view to reopening on Monday morning at the new place seemed incredibly daunting, although the new site was only 500 metres



Sanjay Chopra and Philip Andrew Hayter



Reception area

away! However, with some excellent help from several skilled teams (especially Clark Dental) it all proceeded incredibly smoothly and we still cannot quite believe it happened.

VM: What do you think is the future of implant dentistry?

SC/PH: The implant market is most definitely on the up. It is a fabulous treatment option to be able to offer. It is hugely satisfying for the patient and dentist and can also offer good financial rewards. However, things can go wrong whoever does the treatment. The reputation of dental implants will be seriously compromised unless treatment is being carried out by appropriately trained dentists to a high standard. Reports suggest that the GDC have recently issued a warning regarding this matter, and advised GDPs interested in Implantology to study documentation regarding 'Training Standards in Implant Dentistry' on their website.

VM: What are your top tips in maintaining a successful implant practice and what advice would you give to budding implant dentists?

SC/PH: Implant dentistry can be a very exciting field and certainly a career worth embarking on if it interests you. However, walk before you run. Start with simple cases, or possibly just the restorative and treatment planning aspects. Find yourself a good mentor and go on good courses. If you are not comfortable with doing the surgery, partner up with someone who is and work as a team. Not every dentist who wants to offer implants has to place them, but most dentists could consider learning how to restore them with a teamwork approach. Although continued learning is important in any branch of dentistry it is especially relevant in the ever-changing field of dental implantology. 1