

Can you tell us a bit about your background?

SH: I am a specialist orthodontist with 14 years' experience. I truly love my work and approach it with extreme dedication – bordering on obsession (something that has been mentioned a few times by my colleagues!).

What or who made you choose a career in orthodontics and influenced your interest in lingual ortho?

SH: There are so many people to thank, but the origin of my orthodontic journey started when I was an undergraduate at dental school (Guy's Hospital). I recognised that this speciality of dentistry was clinically rewarding and a senior register in orthodontics called Margaret Collins took me under her wing. At the age of 23 I undertook my first upper and lower fixed appliance bond-up, which back then was considered highly unusual. Over time, I simply followed my ambition with strong focus, determination and persistence, with help from many British orthodontists.

My interest in lingual orthodontics started in January 2001 when I saw the legendary Didier Fillion present at the Alpha Omega society. His treated cases were outstanding and that was my moment of revelation. I then knew that all orthodontics could be delivered using this technique, which comparatively few orthodontists practice regularly. Other lingual orthodontic influences include

Dirk Wiechmann and Kee-Joon Lee, as well as Vincent Kokich and Frank Spear for interdisciplinary orthodontics. The rest is history...

Tell us more about SmileLux.

SH: I wanted to work in an environment that allowed full clinical freedom and the utmost dedication to patient care without restriction. This meant I left public-funded orthodontics to move in a different direction. Hence SmileLux was created from nothing. It is a state-of-the-art specialist orthodontic practice with a very strong focus on customer care and clinical orthodontics with no expense spared.

It started over seven years ago as a squat practice with no patients or referrers and over time has become a busy referral centre, with patients travelling from various parts of the UK and abroad. The highlight was over three years ago when we won best specialist practice in the UK at the Private Dentistry Awards 2014. Since then, we have won numerous awards and the clinic continually grows from strength to strength.

How is the practice structured?

SH: The practice has numerous innovative approaches in the patient journey (some designed by myself) and boundaries are removed allowing a heightened level of thinking. Every team member has a number of skills, some of which overlap and complement each

other very well. Each team member functions almost like two people and the attitude of everyone is exceptional and regularly leaves me humbled. We have gone beyond normal limits hundreds of times and the 'extra mile' is simply routine from morning till night.

How do you think orthodontics has changed since you first started practising?

SH: Patient demands have increased with less acceptance of visible metal appliances. There are more commercial companies than ever promoting orthodontics with limited teaching ability and hence a dilution effect has occurred within the speciality. More general dentists are undertaking orthodontics with mixed success, some are very good and others struggle. Litigation has also increased, unsurprisingly. My caseload is now generally complex and also involves other disciplines, which I find most enjoyable.

You were recently appointed chairman of BLOS – can you tell us more about the organisation?

SH: I have been a serving committee member for over 10 years and it has been a privilege as I have learnt so much. BLOS represents an educational support network for specialist orthodontists with an interest in lingual orthodontics who want to take their skills to the next level.



Commitment to the profession

We speak to the newly appointment chairman of BLOS, **SUNIL HIRANI** about his forward-thinking approach to orthodontics

Fact file

QUALIFICATIONS: BSc(Hons), BDS, MSc, FDSRCS(Eng), MOrthRCS(Eng), FDS(Orth), GCAP(KCL)

POSITION: Principal of SmileLux Specialist Orthodontic Practice, Milton Keynes

DENTAL INTERESTS: Lingual orthodontics, management of hypodontia and tooth wear, digital orthodontics

INTERESTS OUT OF DENTISTRY: Spending time with family and gym training

Can you tell us about your recent trip to South Korea?

SH: This 'green beret' course was beyond phenomenal. I have never in over 20 years as a dentist seen anything like this in the UK or other parts of Europe and I have attended hundreds of lectures at conferences and numerous courses. I undertook this trip to push the boundaries of orthodontic biomechanics, which the Koreans are masters of.

The programme required intense concentration due to long hours. The clinician's approach in solving orthodontic problems was exceptionally innovative and I was able to observe this first hand in a real-life clinical setting with patients. The programme demands that only experienced orthodontists can attend. If this were an analogy, then I was a black belt being taught by a 7th Dan!

What are BLOS study clubs?

SH: These are evening learning and discussion events. The best way to learn is to speak to like-minded colleagues and share ideas and experiences in a

forward-thinking environment. I will, with the support of my committee members, change the direction of BLOS over time. We no longer want to see beautifully treated cases and now exclusively seek troubleshooting/clinical tips to solve biomechanical challenges.

Virtually all orthodontic systems are irrelevant and it is the skill of the clinician in reaching the correct diagnosis, formulating a valid consented treatment plan and applying a sound knowledge of biomechanical principles, coupled with experience that determines the success of a clinical case. Clinicians learn far more from their mistakes or from others. I want colleagues to be able to implement new skills the next day, rather than seeing excellent outcomes with little understanding of the journey, dilemmas and obstacles.

How have patient expectations changed over the years?

SH: They simply rise year after year, which means the skills of the clinician also must rise year-on-year. Without that approach you will simply lag behind

and offer less and less over time. The widening gap between private sector and public sector orthodontics is now becoming even bigger. Patients are far more switched on and specific with their goals, having done vast amounts of research. It is simply not about 'pushing' systems but delivering bespoke orthodontic care.

What are your plans for the future of SmileLux?

SH: We are undergoing a transition into the world of full-blown digital orthodontics with high levels of precision. I now undertake my diagnostic and treatment planning of orthodontics using three separate screens simultaneously.

What do you think is the future for orthodontics?

SH: To be able to treat patients in the shortest time possible with the most aesthetic appliances to the highest standard. This means we have to keep pace with rapidly moving technology.



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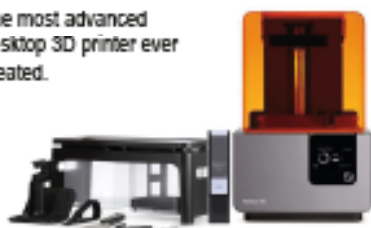
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