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Editorial

Rewards and awards

Rewards are an inherent feature of how people live and work and few people, old or young, junior or senior, are totally immune to receiving rewards, whether these are large or small. Adults as well as younger people may benefit from rewards in the form of thanks, genuine praise or words of appreciation for a task successfully carried out. In the case of paediatric dentistry, it is very common clinical practice, and an important part of encouraging good behaviour in children, to offer some form of reward at the end of successful treatment sessions. This may take the form of a sticker or a toothbrush. These are often highly valued.

In this issue, we publish a letter from Linda Shaw, recently given a rather more substantial reward in being awarded a formal honour in the Queen's New Year's honour list. The award was made specifically for services to paediatric dentistry. In her letter, Linda makes it clear that she regards the award as one for everyone in paediatric dentistry in the UK. A generous thought, although it should not blind us to the many years of effort, work and service Linda has given to the specialty over the years.

It is always good for the Journal to be able to report awards and rewards for excellence or special service for people involved in paediatric dentistry, whether the honour takes the form of an academic or clinical achievement or a public honour. Awards like the one reported here cannot be expected or offered to everyone and it is salutary to remember that many of those who do not receive one may be no less deserving.

Although they are sometimes regarded as outmoded, outdated and inappropriate, the award of prizes, medals and honours like this are, at a minimum, important in showing public recognition of the worth and value of the contribution made by a particular individual to a particular field. In this case it also shows recognition of paediatric dentistry.

Just as rewards for child patients work to encourage better behaviour and effort, so awards to adults should not be seen as an end in themselves but rather as an encouragement for the future. In her letter, Linda points out that she feels her recognition is the result of teamwork. Certainly, as well as rewarding specific individuals, public awards to people in paediatric dentistry should be seen as encouraging excellence in all our efforts for improved child oral health.

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