More women are expected to graduate in dentistry in the UK than men in the years to come. With a larger share of female dentists in the overall workforce, the profession will face new challenges that need to be addressed. A society, Women in Dentistry, recently founded by King’s College London Dental Institute students is seeking to find means of raising the profile of female dental leaders through a nationwide network. Dental Tribune had the opportunity to speak with members Janki Solanki (Co-President), Radhika Ladwa (Co-President) and Roxanne Meh dizadeh (lead writer and publicity) about the initiative and how it intends to help female students achieve their full potential in dentistry.

Dental Tribune: Dentistry has traditionally been a male-dominated profession. Why do you think an increasing number of women have been entering the field in recent years?

Janki Solanki: The general trend in the UK is that more females are going to university than males across the board. Educationalists say the under-representation of male university students is down to attainment patterns in schools and girls outperform boys up to the age of 18. Female students who perform well at GCSE and A levels are more likely to consider high-profile courses with high entry requirements such as dentistry.

It is unclear why certain subjects attract more women than men, or vice versa. The key predictors of what someone will study is what subjects he or she took at A level, and recently attempts have been made to encourage girls to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Radhika Ladwa: It is not just ensuring equal numbers of men and women (gender equality), but also acquiring fairness and justice in the pathway to higher positions (gender equity).

With our society, we hope to help provide the networks, resources and mentoring that will not only make people aware of equality issues, but also recognise the role of female leaders, and support and develop the qualities they offer, which will only strengthen the industry.

Was this the main reason for founding the group?

Solanki: Having recognised the under-representation of females in leadership positions prompted important discussions. However, we felt a suitable forum for this did not exist. Fortunately, being students at the Dental Institute, we are surrounded by incredibly successful females at the top of their field in the dental profession, and we wanted to take the opportunity to make these role models accessible to all students and learn from their experiences.

Is the society open to anyone?

Ladwa: The group was established to help students achieve their full potential in dentistry. It is open to all and in essence any dental student can become a member.

Sign up for FREE

– weekly e-news delivered straight to your inbox
– latest industry developments
– event specials
– exclusive interviews with KOLs
– product showcases
– clinical cases
– job adverts

Sign up to the finest e-read in UK dentistry

www.dental-tribune.co.uk