Dr, Dr – but for how much longer?

Reffering to a dentist as Dr is prevalent in most countries, however, due to recommendations made by the GDC's Standards Committee the GDC are due to consider whether dentists should continue to use this 'courteous' title.

In response to the proposed removal of their title, dentists across the country are arguing their case. Many feel that they have earned their title and continue to do so with their CPD requirements.

It has also been stressed that the lack of title would instantly promote competition between UK dentists and those who have studied dentistry abroad.

For the present moment, the decision has been postponed to carry out an 'impact assessment' and many are hoping that common sense will soon prevail, allowing dentists to continue bearing the title Dr.

The proposed decision has, unsurprisingly, caused debate throughout the country and here are a few examples of the feedback we have received. The words speak for themselves:

"Why don’t the GDC do work that is actually useful and helpful to both patient and dentist? Do people really get confused or is it just yet another theoretical possibility that someone has come up with to verify their own position?"

Anonymous

"I am personally too bothered either way but feel that the profession desperately needs some leadership and those at the top to make a decision and stick to it. If they are really concerned about confusing the public then they should stop doing so! Our medical colleagues are not educated to doctorate level either – in effect their use of the title is also a courtesy title – presumably a gesture of respect please! - particularly when we travel abroad and have to deal with doctors of dentistry elsewhere."

Mark Boulcott

"What I’d really like to understand is who (individuals or pressure groups) are driving this anti-dentist agenda. With all the other coming requirements, this is an extra stage too far. I had hoped that when this coalition government came in, the “nanny state” was going to be withdrawn... If we do not look after things, then it’s our own fault. David Cameron “talks the talk” but when it comes to effective action to create individual responsibility (The Big Society), cutting out “Big Brother” state control seems to be taking a back seat. Let’s get back to being real professionals, whose advice and actions can be trusted; not being regulated by ineffectual pen-pushers in NGOs."

Brian J Clarke BDS

"Firstly, I am not sure that I am personally too bothered either way but feel that the profession desperately needs some leadership and those at the top to make a decision and stick to it. If they are really concerned about confusing the public then they should stop doing so! Our medical colleagues are not educated to doctorate level either – in effect their use of the title is also a courtesy title - presumably a gesture of respect please! - particularly when we travel abroad and have to deal with doctors of dentistry elsewhere.”

Anonymous

"The only people to be confused are dentists worldwide who use the courtesy title Dr as do members of the medical profession. If the courtesy title is to be withdrawn from dentists then only those holding a PhD should be called doctor”

Anonymous

"I am sorry, but this all smacks of some sort of convoluted political correctness that has nothing to do with the patient’s best interests. I doubt if any resolution by the GDC would force my patients to stop referring to me as ‘Dr’ anyway. Besides I would always fall back on my military title of ‘Colonel’ (despite the fact that I do not bear a weapon) or my civil title of ‘Lord’ (having bought a small piece of land in Scotland). Give us a bit of dignity and respect please! - particularly when we travel abroad and have to deal with doctors of dentistry elsewhere."

Anonymous

"The GDC's decision is tantamount to a triumph in clarity and respect and so it is my contention that the proposed abolition of the Dr title is nothing to do with confusing a few patients, anyone that stupid is likely to be confused by their wristwatch."

Bob

"Dentists worldwide use the courtesy title Dr as do members of the medical profession. If the courtesy title is to be withdrawn from dentists then only those holding a PhD should be called doctor”

Anonymous