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19th June 2013

[REDACTED]
GDC
37 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8DQ

sent 19/6/13

Dear [REDACTED]

Re; The Aetiology of Malocclusion,

I hope that your time in the GDC is drawing to a conclusion, I hope it was enjoyable, as you may know, for the last few years I have been trying to push for a debate, or a discussion whether we should have a debate, on the aetiology of malocclusion.

Few subjects could be as fundamental within any profession as a discussion on the cause of the problem that is being treated and I am somewhat shocked at the resistance that I have encountered in my attempts to engage the profession in such a debate. As an orthodontist yourself you must surely share my concern that the orthodontic profession is treating a third of the population with an uncertain understanding of the cause or pathology of malocclusion in all but a small minority of patients, especially given the near universal levels of relapse.

Over the last decade a plethora of good quality research has accumulated in respectable peer reviewed journals which suggests an environmental aetiology. However the current almost purely mechanically based practice is based on a genetic assumption with the suggestion that the aetiology is multifactorial (a common argument in medicine at times of confusion). It would be unethical to call for more research when so much is being ignored, but without engagement the scientific process is ineffective. It could easily be claimed that current therapy is not evidence based.

We are a self-governing profession and it is important that we maintain this with responsible behavior. As the chairman of the GDC, an organization committed to protecting patients, I wanted to ask your opinion as to the next step forwards. At the BOC you condoned whistle blowing, however I have now repeatedly contacted the CHRE, the All Party Dental Committee, the minister of health and the BOS. Apart from going to the public, what other routes are available to move the scientific process forward? I am concerned that there are too many vested interests in both the academia and business of orthodontics that are against rocking the boat.

Your advice would be greatly appreciated.

Best wishes,

Mike Mew

19 June 2013

Kevin O'Brien
GDC
37 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8DQ

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