



Emerging Leader 2018: Dr Laura Gartshore FDS RCS

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Since 2015, The Lady Estelle Wolfson Emerging Leaders Fellowship Programme has encouraged women to apply for senior and leadership roles in the RCS and their surgical fields by providing unique opportunities to get involved in RCS activities. This year, 13 surgeons representing ENT, dental, plastics, general, trauma and orthopaedic surgical specialties were appointed to the prestigious programme.

Dr Laura Gartshore FDS RCS, a Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant in Paediatric Dentistry shares her career pathway to date and explains why applying to the Emerging Leaders Programme was an opportunity not to be missed.

As a clinical academic, and a dentist by trade, I was delighted to be successful in my application to the Lady Estelle Wolfson Emerging Leaders Fellowship cohort for 2018-2019. Particularly as I was in Australia on the wrong side of midnight at the time of my telephone interview.

One of the most appealing features of the year-long Emerging Leaders Fellowship Programme is the ability of Fellows to tailor the events that they attend, and the committees they become involved with, to their individual interests – enabling me to identify and steer a leadership career in the right, personalised direction. Networking opportunities are plentiful, and I have joined the Women in Surgery

network as a result. I have been made to feel welcome, and advice, guidance and support has been available at every step so far.

Pursuing a career in improving children's oral health

Following graduation with a BDS from the University of Liverpool in 2004, I entered a lengthy, yet empowering, training pathway in dentistry, through NHS pre-specialist posts, a Clinical Fellow secondment in Sydney, and an academic post-specialist pathway - juggling the demands of consultant training, delivering higher education, a PhD, and gaining leadership and coaching skills en route. This unashamedly aspirational pathway was worth the balance and effort it demanded.



I commenced my role as a Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant in Paediatric Dentistry at the University of Liverpool in 2017. Paediatric Dentists commission, deliver and supervise the provision of dental care for children with complex oral health problems. We advocate, notably through our specialist society, the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD), for the improved oral health of all children across the UK, many of whom suffer the consequences of preventable dental disease.

Despite successful campaigns like the [Dental Check by One \(#DCby1\) campaign](#) led by BSPD and endorsed by the Faculty of Dental Surgery (FDS), [significant change in the state of children's oral health remains to be seen](#). Tooth decay remains the most common reason for a child aged 5-9 years to be admitted to hospital in England. There continue to be [profound inequalities in dental disease experience](#) and access to care for children living in lower-income families and in the North West, Yorkshire, London, the East Midlands and the North East, in particular.

Campaigns such as #DCby1 need continued support and integration through their inclusion in population level health care plans and via the creation of strategic networks. My research interests include dental education, and as Chair of the Teachers' Branch of the BSPD, I am pleased to have supported the recent recruitment of an undergraduate ambassador for #DCby1. As leaders, we are tasked with ensuring that the emerging dental workforce are leaders in their own right in the fight against preventable dental disease.

At a time of unprecedented pressures within dentistry, and with exceptional numbers of colleagues leaving the dental profession and the UK, strong leadership is required to help turn the tide. The Faculty of Dental Surgery, is at the forefront of training and working towards a stronger NHS with improved, personalised patient care. I welcome the opportunity to use my experiences to assist with the work ahead.

It is a privilege to be part of this year's Emerging Leaders cohort and I look forward to putting this year's lessons learned towards advocating for issues that I am most passionate about. I would encourage those in a similar position to me to grab the opportunity to apply for this Fellowship when recruitment next comes around in Spring 2019.

Dr Laura Gartshore | @LauraGartshore

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