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Flexible working and training for doctors and dentists: a practical guide (2006)

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This book deals primarily with working and training in the United Kingdom National Health Service and in associated academic departments within the UK medical and dental schools. It is aimed at doctors and dentists who are contemplating working or training less than full-time, and at those who advise or guide them.

The need for flexible training and working has risen steadily over the past 30 years as the proportion of females in medicine and dentistry has increased. However, it would be wrong to see the book as aimed solely at women who wish to raise children as well as pursue a career. It provides a valuable resource for those, male or female, with well-founded reasons for wishing to train or work less than full-time—including personal choice, family commitments, or disability.

The book is composed of 18 separate chapters written by 19 contributors and compiled under the editorship of Anne Hastie. Most of the chapters deal specifically with medical training and practice but the final four cover more general issues that also affect dentistry: sabbaticals, leadership, management, and the flexible career, illness and disability; and pensions, maternity leave, and other benefits.

Chapter 4 is specifically devoted to flexible working and training in dentistry and gives a broad outline of specialist training programmes, including those in orthodontics. The reader is, however, referred back to an earlier chapter on training in the medical specialities for details of flexible training. This chapter is very thorough in its coverage of primary care, community, and hospital practice but does not deal with academic dentistry. This is covered comprehensively together with academic medicine, in a separate chapter.

While the general tone of the book is 'rosy' there are several cautions about the disadvantages of less than full-time training and working. There is also a specific warning that the availability of part-time training posts may simply be due to a lack of full-time supervision or because of insufficient funding.

In summary, the book outlines the major areas of interest and concern for those contemplating working or training less than full-time. It also provides a valuable and probably unique resource for clinical tutors and others who guide or manage doctors and dentists working or training flexibly.

Stephen Springate