

At the start line

Dr Jemma Gewargis gives a dentist's perspective on starting a career in aesthetics and how to navigate the minefield of training



The aesthetic medicine market is growing exponentially and so it's an exceptionally exciting time for the industry, with revolutionary products and enhanced techniques being introduced. As such, there is no better time to get involved and diversify your skills in the world of aesthetics, if this is a career path that appeals to you.

WHERE TO START

With so many options of where and how to train, it can feel like navigating a minefield. There are hundreds of introductory courses to choose from and deciding which one is best for you can be difficult. First of all, it is essential to research the industry, what it involves and the different treatments that can be offered. From here, decide what level you'd like to practice at. Are you looking to do a basic course and offer a few treatments, or do you wish to offer a range of treatments at a more advanced level?

At this point, there's understandably still uncertainty and you may be asking yourself questions such as, "Am I ready to commit thousands of pounds towards training if I don't see this being something I truly enjoy?"; "What if it doesn't suit my working style or personality?"; "Is there a demand for it in the area I'm working in?" and, "Is the market saturated with competition already?"

Attending an aesthetics conference will allow a better insight into what is involved before investing in a course. Here you'll meet organisers of training courses and get a better idea of what they can offer. You can also look at the different injectable products available and their uses, and there are often lectures given at an introductory level that can give you a better understanding of what starting out in the field involves. I did exactly this – I attended a conference and went to an introductory lecture by Dr Tapan Patel. This sparked my interest, assured me I'd love the profession and provided many excellent tips for starting in the industry.

TRAINING

It is important to consider a range of factors prior to choosing a training course, which I have outlined below.

1. Type of course

- Firstly, consider the level the course is aimed at and ensure it is for medical professionals
- Consider the duration of training – is the training over a day, weekend or multiple course dates?
- How much theory and practical is involved and is prior learning provided?
- Is the level of training a basic introductory course, advanced training, comprehensive Level 7 training or a University Masters degree?
- What specific treatment areas are covered – upper/mid/lower face.

2. Course support

- Is pre- and post-course support provided?
- What is the course delegate to trainer ratio?
- What is the trainer's level of expertise and years training?

3. Learning

- What treatment areas covered?
- What techniques are used e.g. cannula and needle?
- Are indications, contraindications, consent and photography covered?
- Does it cover different brands and densities of filler?
- Does it cover different types of botulinum toxin and dilution protocols?
- Does it cover management of complications such as vascular occlusion, including the dilution and use of hyaluronidase?
- Will you learn about patient expectation management and post-care advice?
- Does it include learning on marketing and advertising?

CONFERENCES & NETWORKING

There are multiple opportunities throughout the year to get involved in conferences and exhibitions which are a great opportunity to learn and network with like-minded professionals.

Aesthetic Medicine Live is a brilliant annual aesthetic show at Olympia London which brings together a huge range of exhibitors and products under one roof. This is a fantastic chance to educate yourself, meet other professionals in the field and explore what new products are on the market. You can also listen to world-class speakers give lectures and demonstrations, which are invaluable to improving your own knowledge and techniques.

Through networking, I have received invites to attend the Merz Expert Summit UK and Allergan Spark Conferences. These events were fantastic for developing my knowledge further and networking with world-class practitioners. Get in touch with your local representatives in your area for the products you are using too, as they can provide promotional materials and help with training opportunities.

SOCIAL MEDIA

There are more than three billion active monthly users on Facebook and Instagram. They have become powerful ways to engage with current and new clients as well as to network with other professional and product representatives.

Using social media works both ways. Firstly, you can use it to keep up to date with different approaches to treatments and learn about new products on the market. Secondly, it can be used as an effective advertising tool to target your local customer base and is a very useful way to inform both current and potential clientele about the procedures you offer and to demonstrate your knowledge, which builds trust.

As an effective means of showing your work, it does require time and effort to be put in – I suggest allocating a few hours per week to preparing content and brainstorming ideas for the following week. As with anything, consistency is key here.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

As a dentist I already had a patient base, so, depending on your current working environment, once you have trained and become confident in your skills, you can begin to advertise your services to existing patients too. If you don't already have an existing database, you will have to work on building a client list. Either way, I believe it is important to establish rapport with an experienced practitioner you can trust to mentor you through your career. I have found Total Aesthetics to be incredibly invaluable to kick-starting my aesthetics career. It is one of the available options in the

sector to help support career development in aesthetics, with lots of member discounts and an aesthetics sector jobs board with some exclusive roles only visible to members. It's free to register and very accessible for those early in their aesthetic careers.

ONGOING LEARNING

Ongoing CPD and learning is critical in the healthcare industry, and this doesn't exclude the aesthetics field. Subscription to a reputable and educational magazine, such as Aesthetic Medicine, allows you to keep at the forefront of the latest developments in products and techniques. It also gives you information on upcoming events to sign up early for.

DENTISTRY AND FACIAL AESTHETICS

From a personal perspective, the fusion of cosmetic dentistry and facial aesthetics has been a seamless experience. The skillset of injecting and using fine instruments is built into the muscle memory of a dentist and is applicable to the techniques used in aesthetics.

A foundation of in-depth anatomical knowledge studied at university for five years with cadaveric dissection of the head and neck supported the knowledge needed in treating the face. Dentists have strong clinical knowledge of the layers of the soft tissues and

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skeletal bony structures as well as the positioning of teeth and jaw as the face ages. Consideration of the aesthetic proportions as well as exceptional attention to detail is fundamental to the skill of a dentist and is highly applicable to facial aesthetic treatments.

Together, enhancing a smile and an aesthetic treatment of the face can work in harmony to massively impact a patient's confidence, with life-changing results, which is what excites me the most about combining the two. **AM**



Dr Jemma Gewargis is a cosmetic dentist and aesthetic practitioner, splitting her time between two private dental practices and an aesthetic skin clinic in West London. She is passionate about learning and developing her skills in the field of aesthetic medicine. She can be reached on Instagram: @dr.jemma.g and by email: info@drjemma.com