

DR LIVIU STEIER

Warwick Dentistry's MSc in Endodontics Course Director, Dr Liviu Steier insists that sharing knowledge and expertise is the recipe for a successful and fulfilling career



Moving away from purely clinical dentistry into research and education is, for sure, my biggest career achievement,' says Dr Liviu Steier, course director at Warwick Dentistry and principal at MS Dentistry in London, who is motivated to keep building on his expertise through education. 'Sharing knowledge, skills and clinical experience is the most satisfying part of this profession one can have.'

But what motivated him to pursue a career in dentistry in the first place? 'It was the result of a sad dental experience which encouraged me to become a dentist,' he says. 'I lost teeth unnecessarily at the young age of 17 due to a lack of knowledge, expertise and clinical skills on the part of the unprofessional general dental practitioners and specialists who treated me.'

Driven to improve this situation and provide the best possible care, he opened his own practice in Germany in 1985 with his dentist wife Regina Steier, only three years after graduating from dental school at the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, Bucharest, in 1982.

DR LIVIU STEIER

Current positions: Associate Clinical Professor and Course Director MSc in Endodontics, Warwick Dentistry at The University of Warwick; Principal at MS Dentistry, 20 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8GF and Dres Steier, Mayen, Germany.

Dental interests: The MSc in Endodontics at Warwick Dentistry, research in collaboration with my international colleagues and friends (thank you to you all!), learning and teaching dentistry, dentistry, dentistry...

Outside dentistry: Sharing my little free time with my wife (Dr Med Dent Regina Steier); listening and talking on the phone to my daughter who lives in the US whom I miss a lot; going to concerts (from classic music and opera to musicals, and of course let's not forget my love of ballet); reading (yes, outside dentistry, I love *Die Zeit*, *Der Spiegel*, *The Economist*, philosophy and recently, books by Martin Walker.

Soon after, he took up postgraduate education in prosthodontics, implantology and endodontics to build on his clinical skills, before beginning a career in writing and lecturing in 1987, a career move which has seen him manage over 250 postgraduate programmes, write commissioned chapters for different books and publish peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed papers.

He then set up MS Dentistry in London in partnership with his colleague Dr Siavash Mirfendereski but continued to lecture; over the years joining Cologne and Witten Herdecke universities in Germany, and serving as a visiting professor at Tufts (Boston, USA) and Florence School of Dental Medicine in Italy, before his more recent appointment in 2008 at the University of Warwick's Warwick Dentistry, where he currently acts as course director of the MSc in Endodontics course.

DEFINING MOMENTS

There are three particularly important milestones Dr Steier notes during his almost 30-year-long career. The first was being given the opportunity to write his first paper, an important step which he says helped him realise his interest in writing and conducting research. The second came during his postgraduate studies when he was lucky enough to meet some inspiring people that helped to shape his career. 'I have had the honour to learn with, and from, famous teachers like Peter Thomas, Charly Stuart, Arne Lauritzen, RV Tucker, M Heinz Polz, Bruce Dragoo and Carl Misch.' He describes Alexander Gutowski as having made the most impact. 'He was my hero for many years. He directed and redirected my professional development.'

He says the third moment is having had the chance to get to know his patients and work with them long term. 'My practice stayed in the same place for over 25 years, so I had the opportunity to work with my patients for a long time.' This, he says, allowed him to come to several important clinical conclusions, which shaped the direction of his future career. 'I was able to get to know my patients, so I realised how much they benefitted from rehabilitation, rather than emergency care only. I also came to the conclusion that any attempt at saving teeth proves better in the long term, and is also cost-effective for the patient.'

This realisation led him to redirect his postgraduate education to focus purely on endodontics, which gave him the opportunity to learn with and from great international teachers and leaders.

In Dr Steier's opinion, a leader in dentistry is an educator and teacher who is able, not only to teach evidence-based science, but also share their clinical expertise and experience with the dental profession. Is there anyone in particular he thinks fits the bill? 'I was honoured and delighted to cross professional ways with Professor Ed Lynch, who positively influenced my professional career.'

CAREER SATISFACTION

Balancing clinical work with continual education has been instrumental in Dr Steier's career success. 'Professional satisfaction comes as a result of this perfect mixture: education, clinical practice and research. Yes, we have moved towards a money-oriented society, but keeping up professional satisfaction (which I think is mandatory for psychological hygiene) is not a result of financial reward alone, but long-term clinical success.'

On the flip side, has he made any he regrets? 'I am happy to say that I have been blessed to take the right decision at the right time and to have understood early on that professional satisfaction is the most important aspect of a successful and fulfilling professional career.'

ENDODONTIC FUTURE

When it comes to the future, he has many goals he wishes to achieve in the field of endodontics. 'I would like to be able to raise the long-term success and predictability for the treatment of endodontically-diseased teeth via regeneration and coronal rehabilitation. I would also like to continue to deepen and expand already started and new upcoming research; and to edit a new dental manual.'

For readers of PPD, he offers some pragmatic advice: 'We are living through hard economic times which may lead to drawbacks when it comes to professional development and satisfaction. I can only advise readers to set achievable professional goals and work hard to reach them. Do so on sunny days as well as on rainy days!'

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