



In this extract Eva Milburn discusses the attitudes of patients towards her as a hygienist.

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What were the adult patients like when you first saw them? They wouldn't have known what a hygienist was. Did they understand why they'd been sent to see you?

They didn't so I had a lot of explaining to do. I was very young and so the question, "Are you old enough to be doing this, dear?" came up quite often. Sadly they don't ask that anymore. But they were--, a lot of them were very accepting once they saw what I was doing and I'd talk to them about cleaning and so on. Some didn't, "Are you here to sell the toothbrushes?" was another question.

Oh really?

Yes. [Both laugh] Because nobody had heard of us.

And my memory is of the hygienists quite rapidly becoming more popular than the dentists, that you had your faithful flock who loved coming to see you and being kept on the road. Is that a true picture?

Yes, yes, and that still happens; some people like it, some people don't. I can remember a lot of the patients even 37 years on, and they did enjoy it and they could see the benefit.