

“I advise students to become part of international organizations”

INTERVIEW with David Rieforth



David Rieforth graduated in summer 2010 und practices in Berlin.

AIM: Why did you study dentistry and how do you think about it today?

I studied dentistry because already in kindergarten I was fascinated by small things. I was told that I spent hours playing with, and repairing these things. During my time in school, I did two internships; one as a cook, which I liked a lot, and the other one I did at a dental practice which I liked even more. I decided to study dentistry because it gives me the chance to connect crafts with art and medicine—a very fascinating mixture.

AIM: Where do you practice dentistry and what is special about dentistry in your country?

I work in Berlin, Germany's capital, at a small practice that just celebrated its thirtieth birthday. What is special about Germany's dentistry? Since Germany has a very long history of dentistry, various areas and different styles developed. Maybe one could say that German dentistry tends to concentrate on high quality and can be said to have a very high ethical standard. Aesthetics are important too, but the trend of ever whiter teeth is seen through a critical lens by many dentists practicing in Germany—including myself. It can be criticized that for many years prevention seemed to be less important to many German dentists than restoration—I am glad that this is different now.

AIM: Why do you love dentistry?

Love is not the word I would use for an occupation. However, I do feel passion for dentistry. Our working area is very limited and may seem restricted to some people—to me it is definitely not. The mouth is the entry port to the body—and there is a connection between dental or gum problems and serious other diseases like diabetes. I hope that in some years it is common sense that dentists and other health specialists closely cooperate and create something like an holistic medicine. I did not study dentistry to only do restorative work. I really want to help people. When I attended an IADS congress in the Sudan, I went on a medical field trip and had the chance to help, which made me extremely happy. Dentists have a big responsibility toward their patients, thus continued education and psychological training is indispensable.

AIM: What does YDW mean to you?

I did not become part of the YDW family yet. But when I was head of the BdZM, the roof organization for German dental students, I discovered my interest in dental politics. I attended IADS meetings in Egypt and the Sudan. I learned a lot at these international meetings and can only advise students to become part of international organizations. This is a chance to connect with dentists worldwide and to broaden one's own horizon.