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GPs 'filling in' for inadequate dental services

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General practitioners are carrying out work normally done by dentists because of a shortage of NHS dentists, a doctor has claimed.

Writing in this week's British Medical Journal, Dr Alastair Bint from St Luke's Surgery in Guilford said that doctors are seeing an increasing number of patients who visit their GP with dental problems.

The doctor revealed that, in his own practice of over 10,000 registered patients, there has been a 1,600 per cent rise in the number of dental-related consultations over the last ten years.

Dr Bint also noted that, while health minister Ben Bradshaw has advised people without an NHS dentist to go to their GP or primary care trust, GPs are not being compensated for the dental work they are carrying out.

'Once again, GPs are left to pick up work that should be performed by other professionals without adequate remuneration,' he claimed.

Dr Bint's comments coincide with the launch of a new survey conducted for National Smile Month, which found that one in three people brush their teeth for less than a minute.