“It is only as we develop others that we permanently succeed.”
Harvey S. Firestone

Being the good sports, these three University of Maryland School of Dentistry pulp therapy workgroup members agreed to an interview about their mentoring relationship Warhol-style: Dr. James Coll is a clinical professor; Dr. Shahad AlShamali completed an advanced pediatric dentistry program for international dentists; and Dr. Abdullah Marghalani pediatric dentistry resident.

Like all tools used in systematic reviews, the interview questions have been peer reviewed and validated, sort of. The questions are based on those asked by Andy Warhol to the famous and infamous for his magazine Interview. These questions are meant to glean the secret element that makes a workgroup tick.

Q. What did you eat for breakfast?*

Dr. AlShamali: I didn't eat breakfast, its Ramadan now and I'm fasting.

Dr. Coll: Vegetarian omelet, toast, coffee

Dr. Marghalani: It does not matter as long as I have my coffee. I would be happier if I had dates and nuts as well.

Q. What was your first job?*

Dr. AlShamali: My first job was a general dentist at one of the primary health care centers in Kuwait.

Dr. Coll: I worked in the A&P which was a grocery store in suburban Chicago at the age of 16. I brought in food carts, sold wine and liquor in the liquor
department, prepared the lettuce and other produce for display, stocked shelves, and was a check out person.

Dr. Marghalani: A general dentist.

Q. What are you reading right now?*

Dr. AlShamali: Dental related, the AAPD guidelines, as part of residency requirements, & pulp therapy articles. In my free time, I am reading “The Girl on the Train,” I want to finish it before the movie is released.

Dr. Coll: Dentally I am involved in an EBD project on vital pulp therapy in primary teeth and am reading or re-reading many articles on pulpotomy, IPT, and direct pulp cap.


Dr. Marghalani: The Quest for Meaning: Developing a Philosophy of Pluralism by Tariq Ramadan.

Q. Do you have a dream role?* (job, position)

Dr. AlShamali: Beside being a Pediatric dentist, owning my own flower shop has always been my dream.

Dr. Coll: I always dreamed of being a big league baseball player, but never had the talent. I have my dream job, being a teacher in a pediatric dental residency. I get to challenge residents who wish to learn and at the same time stay current in the field of pediatric dentistry.

Dr. Marghalani: The opportunity to bring about lasting change.

Q. Is there anything you regret not doing?* Or doing? (personally or professionally)

Dr. AlShamali: I'm very pleased with the path my life has taken to date. All of the decisions I've made along the way have been for specific reasons and,
ultimately, those decisions have led me to where I am today. There are certain things I could perhaps have done differently, but, no big regrets.

Dr. Coll: I don't look back and regret not doing something once the time passes. It does no good to dwell on missed chances. Just face the challenges God puts before me today and do my best.

Dr. Marghalani: My inherent faculty would place me more on the side of a thinker and analyzer. Therefore, I believe I do less and miss more opportunities. I have committed mistakes but very few fatal ones. However, I try to make peace with myself.

Q. What's your favorite movie?*

Dr. AlShamali: “You've Got Mail!” I can literally watch it every day without being bored!! I love Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan movies.

Dr. Coll: This will date me, “The Graduate” with Dustin Hoffman, “The Quiet Man” with Maureen O'Hara and John Wayne, but more recently I liked “Brooklyn.”

Dr. Marghalani: Movies based on real life stories are my favorite. “Cinderella Man” is one of them.

Q. Do you dream (example: of an ideal practice, job, research)?*

Dr. AlShamali: One of my long-term dream is to establish a specialized center for special needs patients. A center that has a team of doctors from different dental and medical specialties working simultaneously for the benefit of special needs patients in Kuwait.

Dr. Coll: I dream up pulp research projects at times. Since I have my ideal job as a part-time teacher in a dental school, my only other thing I would like to do is possibly to still practice a half-day a week since I have retired.

Dr. Marghalani: This question is a wakeup call to unleash my buried thoughts and dream more. Currently, the materialistic world is occupying a sizable portion of my brain dulling some of my grander ideas. I typically achieve my goals when I imagine and dream myself proceeding and accomplishing those goals.
Q. What are you working on now besides the pulp therapy systematic review?

Dr. AlShamali: I just started my first year as pediatric dental resident at University of Illinois, at Chicago (UIC).

Dr. Coll: To take my mind off the systematic review, my wife, Suzi Seale and I, work in our vegetable/flower garden for relaxation. I swim laps to let my mind recharge also.

Dr. Marghalani: Finishing up my residency and looking forward to the next phase of my life.

Q. Do you think you will ever finish the pulp therapy review?

Dr. AlShamali: I don't think it will finish soon as it’s a huge topic and every day we are learning something new!

Dr. Coll: I wonder that myself at times. However, it will be published this fall, so it has to be done before August.

Dr. Marghalani: What I can say is the pulp therapy review has hooked its grasp onto me, and I onto it. I have developed a robust affinity toward this amazing field.

Q. What have you learned as a result of being a mentor Dr. Coll?

Dr. Coll: I learned that it can be a very time consuming process but for the most part very rewarding. I seem to learn as much if not more than the Pediatric Dental Residents and/or Fellows do from the mentoring relationship.

Q. Drs. AlShamali and Marghalani: what have you learned from working with Dr. Coll?

Dr. AlShamali: I have been fortunate to have Dr. Coll as my mentor. I learned so much from him. The most important thing he taught me is how to believe in myself. As to skills that will help me in my studies, he taught me how to analyze and critically evaluate results, ideas, and points of view.
Dr. Marghalani: Factually, Dr. Coll is among the top 5 experts in the world in pulp therapy for primary teeth. Dr. Coll insisted on calling him ‘Jim’. This act was fundamental for building a mutual and neutral platform where all research group members were given opportunity to express their ideas and all opinions were heard. Interacting with Dr. Coll inspired me to stretch boundaries within and around me. To me, Dr. Coll is a man who lives by ‘what does not kill you makes you stronger’.

Q. **What are the biggest challenges for pediatric dental residents today?**

Dr. Coll: I think the biggest challenge for pediatric dental residents at first is getting a handle on all the different aspects of pediatric dentistry (hospital cases and sedation, pulp therapies, patient management, interceptive ortho etc.) After graduation, the biggest challenge they face is their debt burden, how to manage it, and practice concerns the first few years after graduation.

There are two big differences I see from when I graduated. My fellow dental school classmates and my fellow pedo residents did not face the big debt burden from school. We faced the issue, like today's graduates, of where to practice and would this or that location be OK for a pediatric dentist. There were almost no corporate dental companies that offered employment, so most went to work, like I did, for themselves in practice. Dental educators were not making as much money as private practice, but the difference was not nearly as great as today so more started work in dental schools. Today, the debt from schooling forces many into practice.

The other big difference is that there were almost no women in dental or pediatric dental residencies. It was a male dominated profession; the two women in my dental school class (1965-1969) of 100 were treated very harshly. Now women are present in almost equal numbers and it seems more than 50% of the pedo residents are female. I feel the ingress of females has improved our profession by making pediatric dentistry more aware of parents and their treatment concerns. We now routinely have parents in the operatory which was not the norm in the 1960's or 1970's.

Q. **What do you hope the residents learn from you above all else?**

Dr. Coll: Be honest, keep learning throughout your career, and enjoy every day to the fullest. I try and do those things every day.
Andy Warhol oft quoted line “In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes;” \(^1\) seems prescient today given social media’s reach, making almost anyone famous or infamous for at least 15 minutes.

Not as well-known of a quote is Malala Yousafzai’s “One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world” but it is just as true. Teaching can and does change generations to come, sharing knowledge and learning from one another lives on much longer than any Internet meme as members of the Pulp Therapy Systematic Review workgroup have learned and revealed.

\(^1\) Andy Warhol Probably Never Said His Celebrated "Fifteen Minutes of Fame" Line

*Actual questions Andy Warhol would ask his interviewees.*