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Lion-size job doesn't worry bold dentist

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A dentist's life is, according to some, not the best there is - and when the patient is a fully grown lion, complete with typically bad breath, a root canal procedure is not something many would look forward to.

But it was just another day at the office on Thursday for Pretoria Zoo veterinarian Dr Leon Venter, who successfully performed this procedure on Bruno, at nine, the oldest lion in the zoo.

Zoo spokesperson Angeline Cloete said the procedure, done at Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute, with the assistance of Dr Gerhard Steenkamp, went without a hitch - and Bruno would return to the facility in a few weeks to have a cap fitted to the top right canine.

The root canal work was necessitated by a fracture caused by chewing bones. "This is commonplace among all carnivores, both in zoos and in the wild," Cloete said.

The preparation for Bruno's visit to the dentist was somewhat different from what others go through. Instead of being dragged, screaming and kicking like a child, he was sedated and loaded into a vehicle, which delivered him to Onderstepoort.

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