

Dentists may move from quantity to quality approach on CPD



Dentists may be expected to carry out continuing professional development (CPD) judged on quality rather than the quantity of time spent on the process, it has been revealed.

The General Dental Council published a report¹ on 10 January 2019 in which it set out the current approaches to CPD across the healthcare sector and beyond in anticipation of publishing a discussion document on the issue in the summer.

The GDC commissioned the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE) – the organisation representing academic dentistry and the community of dental educators – to undertake research, carried out from June to October 2018.

The research was in the form of a literature review that covered 874 papers and took data from 184 relevant publications, in addition to a survey circulated widely to relevant research area experts.

The resulting report summarises evidence from across healthcare and non-healthcare sectors on the variety of CPD activities including areas of best practice; variations in different work settings; influence of ‘insight and intelligence’ and qualitative-based CPD models.

When it published its *Shifting the balance: a better, fairer system of dental regulation*² consultation in 2017, the GDC made a commitment to develop a model of CPD designed to encourage and enable dental professionals to take ownership of planning, development and innovation for the process.

The new report was the next stage of this process, said the regulator, as it regarded

the literature review as a way of ensuring that its proposals to further develop CPD systems and regulation were evidence-based, innovative and ‘fit for the future’.

It was also another way to develop the Enhanced CPD scheme that came into force on 1 January 2018 for dentists and 1 August 2018 for dental care professionals.

The new review’s key findings include:

- A shift from regulators, both inside and outside of health, towards qualitative-based CPD models and away from quantitative-based models, which tend to focus on the number of CPD hours completed. The GDC said this shift was likely linked to the inability of quantitative-based models to drive improved performance or patient care
- Take-up of CPD activity is largely driven by its relevance to patients or practice and the inclusion of interactive elements. CPD activity is also enhanced by reflective practice, but these skills are not in-built, and professionals need to be trained in how to reflect well
- There is a consensus on the value of personal development plans to document self-assessment of learning needs, CPD activity and reflections on its impact.

The report says there is some evidence to suggest that a portfolio-based system is superior to a points-based system and examples of professional groups using outcome-based models in the UK include pharmacy, engineering and solicitors in which registrants are not required to amass CPD hours.

In addition, many systems (even those that are not outcomes-based) now include

qualitative aspects such as peer feedback, reflection and personal development planning.

ADEE Project Lead, Professor Jonathan Cowpe, said: ‘Our work demonstrates that there is much change in how CPD is being recognised and managed by different professional groups, across healthcare and non-healthcare sectors.

‘It recognises the general shift seems to be away from simply counting CPD hours, towards increasingly robust processes that are more concerned with how on-going education makes a difference to practice.’

GDC Head of Regulatory Intelligence, David Teeman, said: ‘Following the successful introduction of enhanced CPD in 2018 which made the first steps towards a more meaningful approach to life-long learning in dentistry, we needed a clear and robust evidence-base to provide the grounding for the next stage of CPD development.

‘This systematic review of literature provides just that ahead of the development work taking place early this year and, ultimately, our planned wider engagement with stakeholders on the further developments to CPD this summer.’

1. General Dental Council. A Review of the Literature on Continuing Professional Development (CPD). 2019. Available at <https://www.gdc-uk.org/about/what-we-do/research> (accessed January 2019).
2. General Dental Council. Shifting the balance: a better, fairer system of dental regulation. 2017. <https://www.gdc-uk.org/about/what-we-do/shifting-the-balance> (accessed January 2019).

Notices of death

It is with sadness that we announce the deaths of:

Dr Martin Miller on 22 November 2018, who practised as a GDP in Croydon and was a past president of the Southern Counties Branch of the BDA and treasurer for many years.

Eric John Rowland Morgan, who died on 17 December 2018. Consultant dental surgeon Dr Morgan built up dental and oral surgery provision in South West Wales and was instrumental in setting up a new maxillofacial unit at the Morriston Hospital in Swansea.

Colin Robert Cowell (CBE), who died on 5 December 2018. Dr Cowell was a dentist at Unilever for many years, eventually becoming head of department and he also lectured at The Eastman and UCL, where he was also a senior research fellow.