

Other journals in brief

A selection of abstracts of clinically relevant papers from other journals.
The abstracts on this page have been chosen and edited by Paul Hellyer.

Learning together

Dargue A, Richards C, Fowler E. An exploration of the impact of working in pairs on the dental clinical learning environment: Students' views. *Eur J Dent Educ* 2022; DOI: 10.1111/eje.12780. Online ahead of print.

Best in the early clinical years

Dental students working in pairs in a clinical environment – as operator and assistant – has become 'a tried and tested method to confer clinical skills' and an example of collaborative learning.

Using audio diaries and semi-structured interviews, the researchers investigated students' responses and attitudes to paired working. Students identified that active, experiential and observational learning occurred during the partnerships. A lack of motivation in one of the pair was a barrier to learning. Professional behaviour with good communications and a mutual empathy within the pairings enhanced learning. This positive working relationship, sharing care, led to feelings of being safe and valued. Students suggested that it would be beneficial to ensure there were ground rules for assisting (including the importance of actually attending to assist), clear guidance about the assistant role and the benefits of changing clinical partners.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-022-4066-4>

Learning during COVID-19

Hayes C, Mears M, Rowan S, Dong F, Andrews E. Academic performance and attitudes of dental students impacted by COVID-19. *J Dent Educ* 2022; DOI: 10.1002/jdd.12897. Online ahead of print.

Human contact was missing

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on dental education is widespread. Students used to a face-to-face learning environment had to adapt rapidly to remote online learning. This study from one private, non-profit US dental school examined attitudes and concerns of students from cohorts graduating from 2021 to 2024.

About half of the students were concerned about completing clinical requirements before graduation. When clinical teaching resumed, students were scheduled to see patients from 8 am to 5 pm with no formal lunch break, which was 'especially draining.' Many found remote learning difficult, were lacking motivation and found it did not replace adequately the in-person contact with teachers. More than half of students were depressed or overwhelmingly stressed but only 20% sought therapy.

Although from only one dental school, with a limited response rate to questionnaires, the study raises issues of students' limited clinical experiences during the pandemic and the importance of human engagement in delivering the dental school curriculum.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-022-4068-2>

Learning as a dental nurse

Leadbeater D, Tjaya K C, Li P, Ma H S, Phan A J, Peck C. Professional knowledge acquisition of dental students employed part-time as dental assistants. *Eur J Dent Educ* 2022; DOI: 10.1111/eje.12782. Online ahead of print.

Developed an understanding of teamworking

Dental students who chose to work part-time in dental practice whilst at university may acquire additional skills. Sixteen dental students attending the University of Sydney were interviewed about these roles, which were interpreted widely as including chairside assisting, reception, sterilisation nurse and working in a dental laboratory. All were in their penultimate or final year of training and had worked for more than six months.

Students gained a greater understanding of the routines, rhythms and responsibilities of a dental practice and the value of teamworking – eg 'I don't get lunch often (but) we're all in it together so it's alright.' The importance of learning about patient communication and interactions were stressed, by 'listening to my dentist explain ... things to patients in a more casual and friendly way.' They learnt about calmness, perseverance and learning from mistakes, leading to a sense of belonging in the team. All of the team from manager to hygienist to dentist contributed to the learning experience.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-022-4067-3>

Learning about working in the UK

Davda L S, Radford D R, Scambler S, Gallagher J E. Accreditation and professional integration experiences of internationally qualified dentists working in the United Kingdom. *Hum Resour Health* 2022; **20**: 7.

Multiple barriers to be overcome

In 2019, 12,007 (28%) dentists registered with the UK General Dental Council qualified overseas. Of these, 57% qualified in the European Economic Area (EEA) and 30% through the Overseas Registration Examination (ORE). A purposive sample of 38 internationally qualified dentists (IQDs) from six World Health Organisation regions, working in a range of settings in the United Kingdom (private and NHS general practice, hospitals and community services), were interviewed.

Barriers to integration included stringent registration exams, language competency and access to training pathways. Non-EEA dentists had more barriers than EEA IQDs. The ORE was perceived as an expensive, lengthy process. One dentist felt, however, that it prepared her well for work in the UK. Foundation training and acquiring a performer number were also not easy for non-EEA IQDs, a situation which was exploited by some practices. Some reported instances of discrimination based on accent, gender and ethnicity. Informal social media support networks were found helpful but little formal support was available.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-022-4069-1>