

# Supporting the dental profession, supporting dental research – The MPS Foundation

By Dr Graham Stokes, dentist, and Chair of The MPS Foundation

Dental Protection is part of The Medical Protection Society (MPS), and we are proud to announce the second year of The MPS Foundation's Grant Programme – a global, not-for-profit research initiative that aims to help shape the future of patient safety and the wellbeing of dental professionals through funding ambitious research.

Our focus is on helping dental professionals navigate practice challenges, finding research solutions that enhance patient care, safety, and outcomes, supporting the wellbeing of dental professionals, and developing expertise in risk reduction. Last year we supported a range of projects, including research into assessing and anticipating dental patient stress and anxiety, and how sports psychology could be utilised to increase wellbeing in high pressure and challenging situations.

At Dental Protection, we recognise that patient care and safety, and the wellbeing of the dental team, is vitally important to members and the wider dental profession.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced that 2021–2030 is the 'Decade of Patient Safety', stating, 'Improving and ensuring patient safety is a growing challenge to health service delivery globally', and that, 'unsafe health care causes a significant level of avoidable patient harm and human suffering, places a considerable strain on health system finances and leads to a loss of trust in health systems.'<sup>1</sup>

More recently, the General Dental Council (GDC) published 'Mental Health and Wellbeing in Dentistry: A Rapid Evidence Assessment'. One of its conclusions was, 'There is a paucity of research and evaluation on interventions to improve dentists' and DCPs' mental health and wellbeing ... There is a need for robust studies to evaluate the effectiveness of psychoeducational and/or organisation directed interventions... There are challenges in generalising findings from other healthcare sectors... due for instance to

the distinct characteristics of the organisation of dental practices and services.'<sup>2</sup>

The MPS Foundation wants to improve patient safety by funding research that can be used by professionals in their work environments. We also recognise that the wellbeing of the dental team is a growing and important area of research.

**The 2023 MPS Foundation Grant Programme**  
We will fund an annual research grant programme, considering:

- Proposals with a total budget of up to £60,000 – or equivalent in local currency – that last between three and 24 months
- Proposals with a total budget of over £60,000 and under £200,000 – or equivalent in local currency – that last between 12 and 36 months.

The majority of research must be conducted in a country or region where MPS has members, namely the UK, Ireland, the Caribbean and Bermuda, South Africa, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Australia. Proposals covering multiple countries are welcomed.

Our work and grant programme will focus on supporting five strategic goals – to support:

1. Research that meaningfully contributes to reducing risk for patients and dental professionals
2. Research that meaningfully contributes to improving wellbeing for dental professionals
3. Research that creates and contributes to knowledge that improves patient care, safety, and the wellbeing of dental professionals
4. Helping to generate knowledge-informing expertise in risk reduction and management
5. Research that establishes 'what works' and how this can be translated into workplaces.

The WHO states that, 'most adverse events can potentially be avoided with effective prevention and mitigation strategies, including... improved policies,



data systems, redesigned processes of care (including addressing human factors, including training), environmental hygiene and infrastructure, better organisational culture to improve practices, supportive and effective regulatory systems, and improved communication strategies.'<sup>1</sup>

We are keen to explore these areas and focus on the impact of:

- Human factors on patient safety, outcomes, and risk
- Processes and delivery models on patient safety, outcomes, and risk
- Digital integration and technology on patient safety, outcomes, and risk
- The personal and professional wellbeing and development of healthcare professionals
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning innovations in dental education.

## Find out more

The MPS Foundation Board is chaired by Dr Graham Stokes, a member of the MPS Council and the Dental Protection Board. The Head of The MPS Foundation is Adrian Jackson. Visit [www.thempsfoundation.org/bdj](http://www.thempsfoundation.org/bdj) or contact [info@TheMPSFoundation.org](mailto:info@TheMPSFoundation.org).

## References

1. World Health Organization. World Health Assembly, 72. Global action on patient safety. 2019. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/329284> (accessed March 2023).
2. Plessas A, Paisi M, Bryce M et al. Mental Health and Wellbeing in Dentistry: A Rapid Evidence Assessment. General Dental Council, 4 June 2021. Available at: [https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/research/mental-health-and-wellbeing-in-dentistry27973e06-eb0f-4ee2-b92f-7fee3d2baf5b.pdf?sfvrsn=511f2ef9\\_5](https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/research/mental-health-and-wellbeing-in-dentistry27973e06-eb0f-4ee2-b92f-7fee3d2baf5b.pdf?sfvrsn=511f2ef9_5) (accessed March 2023).