

Association of Basic Science Teachers in Dentistry

Autumn Newsletter - September 2015



Presidents Message

Now the summer is over and the new academic year is about to begin, may I remind you of a key event. The Annual General Meeting of the Association will take place during the BSODR annual meeting In Cardiff (see overleaf).



I urge as many members as possible to attend. Interested non-members who wish to find out about the Association are welcome to participate although, of course, they will be unable to vote.

Some important issues need discussion. Several committee posts need to be filled and members are encouraged to apply for election/re-election. If interested in furthering the work of the Association do please consider standing for office. Paul Anderson (Secretary / Treasurer) will be circulating details.

Key issues to be considered including the 'on-line' membership system being developed by Marcello Riggio (Membership Secretary) and Paul Anderson. This aims to contemporise our membership infra-structure and make the task of our Hon Secretary/Treasurer, and Membership Secretary easier to integrate with their heavy professional commitments.

A second issue is that of our annual subscription, currently £5.00 per annum. These subscriptions represent a relatively small income for the Association. So, Paul and Marcello have proposed

that we either substantially increase the annual subscription or drop it altogether, relying instead on registration fees and sponsorship to maintain our income. The implications of this need to be discussed, and a consensus achieved as to the way we should proceed.

Discussion relating to criteria for membership of the Association may well raise issues requiring modification of the Association's Constitution. Again the implications of this will need to be considered.

I would also like to thank all those involved with the Special Interest Group meeting at ADEE 2015 in Szeged, Hungary. This was a particularly vibrant session, noticed by the wider dental community, and most encouraging for the future of biomedical sciences in the European dental curriculum (details overleaf). One outcome has been the possibility of the Association being represented at a forthcoming meeting of the French Association of Oral Biologists to be held in Lille in September.

Finally, I have heard that the last remaining founder member who is still active in the Association has had to present her apologies as she will be unable to attend the AGM in Cardiff. The reason, we will all agree, is very valid. Josie Beeley is shortly to celebrate her golden wedding. I am sure that we will all want to wish her every happiness.

Website

Over the last 18 months this has undergone a transformation, and we now have a 'shop window' which is contemporary and practical in the sense that it is easy for relative amateurs (e.g. Committee members) to upload without recourse to external assistance. It is continuing to evolve and there are still issues which need to be addressed. Even so, it has already generated a positive response and any further feedback would be gratefully received. Thanks are due to the Scheven family for their help in making this possible.

In this context Peter Holbrook from the University of Iceland has opened discussion about the particular problems faced by small schools. Often staffing levels are low and they have difficulty providing dentally focussed topic teaching across the wide range of disciplines a contemporary undergraduate dental basic medical science (BMS) curriculum requires. Our website may be developed to assist with this by linking to electronic resources and uploading items in order to make them widely available. So any 'educational' links you can suggest, or documents you would like to submit for consideration for inclusion would be most welcome.

ADEE Szeged 2015

This year's ADEE meeting themed around *'Communication and Interaction in Dentistry'* was perhaps more directly targeted at the wider dental team than basic science faculty. Nevertheless, there were relevant issues in the discussion. For example, in considering behaviour change, one speaker emphasised that an understanding of disease processes were necessary to achieve a desirable outcome for patients. Another related to the emerging theme of inter-professional education, noting that the achievement of common goals required an understanding of a shared theoretical framework, implicitly including BMS. A further presentation commented on the way students learn, noting that in a contemporary learning environment social media were key tools in the way students engage both with each other and with specific topics. By monitoring social media usage, researchers in one university observed that there was not a single hour of the day when a student somewhere was not engaged in a learning related activity *'on-line'*. Social media are now part of the learning environment and it is incumbent on us to acquire the skills necessary to exploit them if we are to optimise the student learning experience.



Dental students from different countries contributing to our SIG in at ADEE 2015 in Szeged

ADEE Special Interest Group (SIG): Biomedical Sciences in Dentistry; Developing a Contemporary Core Curriculum.

This SIG meeting was the third in a series held at successive ADEE meetings, convened by the Association and aimed at developing a European *'core curriculum'* in BMS for undergraduate dental programmes. This is intended as a guide to curriculum planners fulfilling a similar role to core curricula tabled by other specialist societies. Fourteen countries were represented and the session was enhanced by a particularly impressive group of students representative of four dental schools.

Following an introductory talk, the first draft of *'core curriculum'* was presented, and the meeting divided into four discussion groups to consider different aspects. Discussion was extremely lively, and valuable feedback was obtained to inform the development of the document. The students' input was particularly useful, emphasising the need to contextualise topic coverage to clinical situations. In curricula in which basic science was widely separated from the clinic it was often difficult for students to engage with, and appreciate the relevance of specific basic science issues.

There was debate about the position of biomaterials within the dental curriculum, whether it should be considered as a BMS or part of the clinical disciplines. Whilst the properties, selection and use of individual materials is clearly a clinical area this is underpinned by biomaterials science, a necessary part of any dental BMS curriculum.

The document will now be revised to incorporate this feedback and comments widely sought. The objective will be to present a definitive version at the Barcelona ADEE meeting next summer. In due course we hope to post this document on our and/or the ADEE website. We will advise you when this happens. Any feedback you may offer will be gratefully received.

Future Meetings

Dates of forthcoming meetings are listed below. The 7th European meeting will be held ACTA in Amsterdam hosted by Henk Brandt. It will be themed around Saliva in the undergraduate BMS curriculum and will aim to update dental pre-clinical faculty on recent developments in salivary biology. Consideration of saliva and salivary gland function requires a holistic approach. This involves knowledge from a range of disciplines from anatomy and biochemistry, through to pathology and oral medicine. Thus, it may be readily adapted to a holistic strategy involving contextualised, integrated consideration of the area, informed by research, and bridging the gap between the lab and the clinic. We hope to circulate details of the provisional programme by the end of September.

- 15th September 2015: 13.00-13.45 the Annual General Meeting of the Association will take place during the British Society for Oral and Dental Research (BSODR) meeting in Cardiff. For further details please see the BSODR website.
- 7th/8th April 2016: 7th ABSTD European Meeting 2016 - *'Saliva – whetting the appetite for learning – key concepts for an integrated dental curriculum'* ACTA - Amsterdam. Further details will follow.