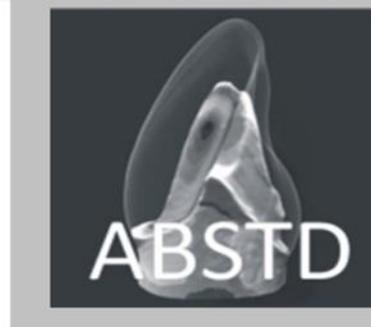


Association of Basic Science Teachers in Dentistry Newsletter - August 2018



ABSTD News

Over the summer there were two major meetings, the International Association for Dental Research (IADR/PER) General Session in London from 25th-28th of July and the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE) in Oslo from 22nd-24th of August. We were represented and active at each; both were important in different ways, so the main theme of this newsletter are meeting summaries. At IADR, the Association co-sponsored a symposium on Salivary Diagnostics organised by the Oral Medicine and Pathology group (OMPG) of the British Society for Oral and Dental Research (BSODR). This was a great success. Although scheduled for 8.00AM on the Saturday morning of the conference, more than 50 people attended, and it attracted a group of speakers that we would not have been able to bring together on our own. This confirmed the principle of getting together with other professional groups to cover areas of

mutual interest is sound and one which we need to develop further. The ADEE meeting was somewhat disappointing, with very little Biomedical Science input, far less than on previous occasions. The basic sciences are the foundation on which a contemporary, scientifically based dental profession is built, so this is a wake-up call! On future occasions we need to be much more proactive, and visible as advocates of the basic sciences in dental curricula.

A newsletter outlining plans for the forthcoming year and updating on outstanding issues such as the proposal that the Association should change its name, the essay prize and other administrative matters will follow in the Autumn. In the meantime, many congratulations to Marcello Riggio (Glasgow) on becoming BSODR President - Elect .

IADR London 2018 – Salivary Diagnostics Symposium

A key objective of the symposium was to summarise recent advances and provide an update both to researchers and teachers. In doing so it will inform the preparation of contemporary, research informed curricular content in this rapidly evolving area. Paradoxically, the last session, '*Individual Variation and Correlations in the Salivary Peptide Profiles of Healthy Adults*' by Henk Brand (ACTA, Amsterdam) provided a justification for the symposium by arguing that,

if salivary diagnostics are to become commonplace, baseline data are required at a level of detail which matches that available for other body fluids such as the blood. Jill Maron (Tufts, Boston), a neonatologist, considered '*Salivary Diagnostics in Paediatrics*', and provided insight into an application of salivary diagnostics often overlooked by those with an oral healthcare background. She pointed out that the amount of blood available for analysis in tiny, pre-term infants is extremely limited

IADR London 2018 – Salivary Diagnostics Symposium (continued)

and how, for some analyses, a mixed saliva sample may provide an easily collectable alternative. The remaining two speakers then considered aspects what we might look for of diagnostic value in saliva. David Wong (UCLA), in a presentation entitled '*Salivary Diagnostics and Salivaomics*', flagged the emerging field of free RNA in the blood and saliva, hypothesizing that circulating fragments of extra-cellular RNA in saliva are of potential value as biomarkers of neoplastic processes including both primary neoplasms of the head

and neck and those arising at other sites. Stuart Hunt (Sheffield, UK) introduced us to '*Salivary Extracellular Vesicles as a Diagnostic Tool*', an emerging area not often considered, but nevertheless of great relevance.

Finally, thanks are due to Lynne Bingle from the University of Sheffield, an ABSTD member and Secretary of the OMPG of BSODR for putting in the enormous amount of work to make this symposium a success.

ADEE Oslo 2018

The meeting, themed around '*Dental Education in a Changing Society*' was broad and crossed many domains of dental school activity. There was an emphasis on how new technologies may be exploited in dental teaching but, this was very focused on the teaching of restorative clinical skills, building and updating on the ADEE meeting in Amsterdam in 2010. Technologies are impacting on the dental workplace in a myriad of ways yet, outside of the application of simulation or virtual reality to pre-clinical operative techniques, these were only briefly mentioned. For example, in our meeting in Dundee in April 2010, Peter Mossey, Professor of Orthodontics in Dundee considered advances in scanning technology, and how these were removing the need for traditional dental impressions. In time, this will be one of a number of changes arising from digitisation which will fundamentally alter the working environment in which our students practice, and for which they need to be prepared. One speaker, Professor Gary Hack (University of Maryland), suggested that in designing dental schools and dental curricula for the future, we need to guess what the middle 21st century dental surgery will look like. We need to take into account advances,

and incorporate them into our teaching. Adoption of a more holistic approach at the meeting would have gone some way to achieving this. In this regard, this represented an opportunity lost.

Despite the scarcity of Biomedical Science coverage there was a very brief mention of virtual microscopy which is becoming commonplace in many schools. This comes with a degree of risk. Virtual microscopy requires digitisation of images from histological preparations which have been carefully prepared, preserved and archived over many years. Yet, there are already examples of schools where slide archives have been deemed of little value and disposed of, and others where techniques, for example those necessary to prepare ground sections of teeth, no longer exist. If our resource of histological preparations is lost it will impact negatively on the breadth and quality of the digital imaging we are able to deliver, and ultimately to the learning experience of our students. So, whilst we must embrace the future we should also, where appropriate, take care not to '*throw the baby out with the bath water*' and preserve what needs to be preserved.

Future Meetings

Details will follow in an Autumn newsletter