



## Editors Notes

It is now 9 months since the start of the SARS-CoV-2 lockdown, and without exception, we are finding that the workplaces we are now living with are very different to those we knew a year ago. Our working environments are now increasingly shaped by infection control, social distancing issues and a need to ensure that the clinical elements of our programmes continue match any jurisdictional requirements. In the UK this means satisfying the General Dental Council. Planning for this is complicated enough, but the need to make provision for staff and students who are socially isolating, or who are having to cope with personal situations driven by the pandemic, compounds this. Furthermore, we have had to face the challenge of welcoming new students to campus for the first time

Most schools are seeing a drastic reduction in 'face to face' teaching with a move towards a blended combination of asynchronous, pre-recorded lectures or real time 'on-line' Zoom sessions, with real challenges emerging over how chairside clinical teaching will be accommodated. However, there are positives. We have become adept at using distance learning and are gaining increasing familiarity with new technologies or approaches such as 'on-line' assessments with 'remote proctoring'. Undoubtedly, some of what we have learnt will remain with us long after the pandemic has subsided and this will offer opportunities for schools to engage with each other or share resources. ASEiD should assume a lead role in facilitating this. Furthermore, meetings which hitherto were held 'face to face', have successfully been conducted using web based technologies.

Several colleagues have commented how, in

some circumstances, this has been extremely effective. I endorse this view and have attended successful AGM's run in this way. In the summer I was privileged to be able to attend an American Association of Oral Medicine (AAOM) annual scientific meeting, delivered virtually in response to the SARS-CoV-2 crisis. Aside from having to deal with the time difference (it was scheduled in Pacific Time!), this was ideal for me, as normally I would have been unable to attend but the current situation allowed me to do so. Other professional groups (e.g. our colleagues in Restorative Dentistry ably led by Cathy Warren and her team in combination with the Royal Society of Medicine) have successfully adopted a similar approach.

ASEiD has been relatively quiet during the crisis. However, in the April 2020 newsletter we did promise that as soon as the SARS pandemic started to abate, we would resume our activities. Now that Christmas is upon us and we are almost ready to put 2020 behind us we need to remember and reaffirm this undertaking. At a Zoom committee meeting held recently, outline plans were discussed and are detailed in the 'Future Meetings' section. In the short term, our activities will be Zoom based with a return to 'face to face' meetings as soon as we can. It will be interesting to see how the Zoom based approach will impact on the range of participants attending. Will it make it easier for members to join in.

With these thoughts in mind ASEiD would like to wish all members, friends, colleagues and well wishers a very happy Christmas and a successful and prosperous New Year.

Jon Bennett



# Association of Science Educators in Dentistry (ASEiD)

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## Future Meetings

### Annual General Meeting (AGM)

We propose to hold AGM to coincide with the BSODR meeting currently scheduled for Birmingham in September 2021. Details will follow.

### Scientific Meeting

This will be a Zoom based meeting scheduled for early 2021 (date to be confirmed) and will be based around '*Decolonisation of the Science Curriculum in Dentistry*'. A great deal of our basic science teaching is focussed around the average, young Caucasian as being the 'normal'. But, we live in a multiracial, multicultural society and how we deal with these differences has recently become a topical issue. The meeting will consider differences from a scientific perspective, but also from an educational point of view looking at how we might adjust our teaching to accommodate them, and will seek to bring together biomedical scientists, oral healthcare professionals, dental educationalists and anthropologists.

## Committee Elections

The previous committee was elected in 2018 at the Dundee meeting mostly for three year terms. There will be no pressing need for elections this year but these will have to take place at the 2021 AGM. If you are interested in assuming a wider role within the Association now is the time to start thinking about it. If interested and would like more information please contact the President, Immediate Past President, or Secretary/Treasurer for more information.

## Podcasts in Dental Science

The editor is exploring the possibility of recording a series of short interviews of 10-15 mins duration relating to topical areas of biomedical science as they relate to Dentistry. These could then be made available on the Website as podcasts. If you are interested in helping with this project please contact [jon.bennett@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:jon.bennett@plymouth.ac.uk).

## Essay Prize

We hope to re-run an essay prize competition during the academic year 2021-2022. This will follow the guidelines established for our 2017 competition and will be open to all students studying for a degree or diploma qualifying them for registration as a dentist or other oral healthcare professional. Many schools now run degree programmes in Dental Therapy and Hygiene or Dental Technology, and we are anxious that students on these programmes should have the opportunity to compete should they wish to. The title of the essay will be decided in due course. However, if you would like to suggest a title please feel free to do so. Your ideas would be gratefully received.

