**SOHRC Conference Stirling - September 21st 2017**

**Education Group Workshops – Summary of Group Discussions**

This document briefly outlines some of the group discussions around the broad topics of student selection and undergraduate assessment which took place in the afternoon session of this meeting. A summary of the main areas for future research is stated at the end of the document.

**Section 1: Selection Processes for Dental Programmes**

1. **How can we be sure that we are assessing against appropriate criteria?**

* Widely agreed that this needs to be guided by the GDC Preparing for Practice document.
  + Some questioned whether there are any other relevant national guidelines? If not, whether there is a need to produce some national guidelines.
* Several groups commented on the importance of assessing resilience, but recognised that it was difficult to assess in MMIs. Are the current MMI stations valid?
* Several groups commented about the changing workforce requirements. What are the current and future workforce requirements?
  + How to identify whether a 17 year old will make a good dentist?
* Some groups commented regarding the strengths and weaknesses of MMIs versus Interviews.
  + Is “expert opinion” valid?
  + MMI assess more criteria and are more objective.
  + One group mentioned the importance of assessing student motivation and that this was likely to be more easily assessed in interviews.
* Other general comments:
  + Possible University tensions – Appeals procedures.
  + Very high percentage of students graduate, so must be doing something right.

1. **How do we assess whether our current procedures are fit for purpose?**

* Several comments regarding the changing workforce requirements.
  + Identify the requirements first then ways to assess this.
* Many groups commented that all schools are using MMIs, but are they fit for purpose? Lack of good quality evidence in dentistry. There is a need for sharing and standardisation. Suggested that a review of the current MMIs is required.
  + A review would help to identify what data is required.
* Groups commented on the need for longitudinal data on the performance of candidates.
  + Some stated looking at data from primary school through to practice, while others stated from selection, in course, VT to professional life/Fitness to Practice.
    - Challenges regarding data protection and difficulty in tracking beyond VT.
    - Data is available to do a retrospective analysis – need to ensure ethics and information governance. This is possible as long as people not identifiable.
  + Need to focus on establishing what are the key characteristics of a good practitioner and ways to select candidates who have these?
* Some comments in this section about the importance of assessing resilience.

1. **What changes do we need to implement?**

* Several groups highlighted widening access and the need to do more in this area.
  + Is there a need to rethink the level of academic achievement required – pros & cons – Do we need to look at the assessment processes used for this group?
  + What are the challenges when there are targets for different groups?
  + The value of Pre-dental/Gateway courses.
* What happens in S6 if a student has attained their entry qualifications in S5?
* Consider the need to construct MMIs with input from other disciplines outside dentistry.
* Again, the issue of assessing resilience was mentioned here.

1. **What are the key research questions for the SOHRC Education Group?**

* What is the evidence to support the move to a national selection process/event?
* Is there a valid measure of assessing practical skills at selection which correlates with (in-course) practical/clinical performance?
* Longitudinal studies following candidates from school, selection, in school, VT and into practice. What are the key attributes/qualities/skills required to make a good dentist?
  + Identify appropriate criteria/attributes which would indicate that a 17 year old admissions candidate would make a good dentist.
    - Look at VTs, postgrads and practitioners.
  + Is there a difference with students who didn’t get into dentistry initially but completed another degree before reapplying?
  + Compare students who successfully applied to dentistry versus those who didn’t.
  + Why do students drop of the course and why?
* Differences in retention rates between interviews and MMIs.
* Process evaluation of widening access groups:
  + Reach project
  + Outcome
  + Process evaluation
  + Uptake
  + New arrangements effective for widening access
* What is the predictive validity of selection tools? (Already being investigated?)
* Can undergraduate longitudinal data predict performance in VT? (Already being investigated?)

**Section 2: Assessment Processes in Undergraduate Dental Education**

1. **Do our assessments capture the soft skills competency of our UG students – professionalism, emotional intelligence, empathy, teamwork, etc.?**

* Information from groups suggested that this is currently insufficient as it can be difficult to measure objectively.
  + Several comments about the difficulty in defining professionalism.
* Several groups commented on the need to have input/assessment from the wider dental team (dental nurses and other DCPs).
  + Currently underused.
  + What are the training requirements (i.e. assessor training) and challenges to achieve this?
  + Also there is a need for patient input.
* How do we best collate data from multiple assessment tools (e.g. OSCEs, Liftupp, 3600 Feedback/MSF, etc.) and make valid decisions?
* How does the information from multi-source feedback correlate to Liftupp data?

1. **Do we use tools to promote reflection, critical thinking, and continued learning (e.g. self- or peer assessment, portfolios, etc.) in the assessment process adequately? If so, should UG and PG assessment processes be different?**

* Comments from groups suggested that further work is required in this area.
* Concerns raised about whether we teach students to reflect and do they truly do it?
  + Students being “nudged” to reflect.
    - How can students best engage with reflection? How would students like to reflect? Written, social media, online or video (V-LOG)? Possible issues?
    - Do we teach students how to reflect, analyse and collate their reflections? Need to encourage students to assess their own performance data and reflect.
    - Is reflection best done in groups/shared experiences or individually /personally/privately?
* Is the assessment of reflection counterproductive?
  + Assessment versus requirement for life-long learning.
* General consensus that similar methods of assessment processes should be used in UG and PG dentistry.
  + Need for user friendly and transferable systems.

1. **In a democracy, it is said that the poor remain poor and the rich become richer! In our assessment and feedback processes, do we facilitate the poorly performing students to improve?**

* Consensus that efforts are made to help struggling students and that early identification of the poorly performing student is essential.
* Concerns raised regarding Liftupp encouraging feedback only on poor performance. May be viewed as overly negative by students.
* Other Issues raised relating to:
  + Student enthusiasm.
  + How much staff support and time is required for poorly performing students?
  + Systems failure.
  + University processes/expectations.

1. **What are the key research questions for the SOHRC Education Group?**

* Liftupp:
  + How valid is the data?
  + How best to use the data (student progression & assessment)? How can it be integrated with other assessment tools?
  + How students view Liftupp?
* What is the life-long effect of reflection on future clinical practice?

**Key Questions:**

* Validity of selection processes. Is there a correlation between performance in MMIs to performance in dental school, VT and dental practice?
  + Longitudinal review from retrospective data – various sources for available data.
  + Cohort studies to follow from primary school onwards.
* Standardisation and sharing of MMIs. Is there a need for national testing?
* Qualitative studies on what are the attributes for being a good dentist? How can these attributes be incorporated into the selection process?
* What are the current and future workforce requirements? Is there a need to change the selection process to take these changes into account?
* How can MMI stations be used to assess resilience?
* Widening access issues. What are the effect of targets?
* Liftupp:
  + How valid is the data?
  + How should schools to use the data for progression and assessment?
  + How can Liftupp data be integrated with data from other assessment tools?
* What is the life-long effect of reflection on future clinical practice?