

Letter to the Editor

Rallying call for fellows and members to work with The British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons to educate and promote oral and maxillofacial surgery to medics and dentists

Sir,

As the President, Chair, and member of Council with the “Youth Policy” portfolio, respectively, for the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (BAOMS) we welcome the recent paper by Payne et al,¹ which highlighted the work needed to improve students’ knowledge of oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMFS) and to raise their awareness of the specialty as a great choice of career.

The objective of our “Youth Policy” (initially over the next three years) is to gather all examples of “best practice” of OMFS education and recruitment, so that we can share them across all OMFS units. We already know of filled lecture halls for the extra-curricular series of lectures involving both surgeons and patients that are run by Iain Hutchison in London. In some Universities, there are strong OMFS links between student surgical societies and local surgeons with annual lectures (whose catering is supported by mini-grants from BAOMS) for example, the Surgical Scousers in Liverpool. BAOMS mini-grants to support events to educate dentists and doctors and promote OMFS have been available for three years, and applications from members and fellows for this funding is increasing year on year and are refused very rarely.

First-degree students who are interested in OMFS can apply for free associate membership and receive a copy of The British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery each month, but how do those interested in our specialty find out about this bargain? We need you to “fly the flag”, because even when OMF surgeons are directly included in the delivery of the curriculum in medical or dentals schools, the amount of direct exposure to our specialty is still vanishingly small.

We therefore make a plea to all members and fellows of BAOMS who are interested in improving education in and recruitment to OMFS to contact our office. We aim to have a small team within the geographical region of each training rotation (a consultant, a trainee, and a second-degree student in each medical or dental school) that we will ask to apply “best practice” in the education and promotion of OMFS. The most effective way to “punch above our weight” is to provide exciting, accessible extra-curricular events, and we are determined, with the help of our members, to make this happen.

Conflict of interest

All the authors are on the Council of the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons.

Ethics statement/confirmation of patient’s permission

None needed.

Reference

1. Payne KF, KIELTY P, TAHIM A, et al. No change in the teaching of oral and maxillofacial surgery to medical students. *Br J Oral Maxillofac Surg* 2018 (in press).

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