

Making dental education fairer: exploring Differential Attainment in Undergraduate Dental Education.

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Abstract

Aim: To improve fairness in dental education

Questions:

- Does DA exist, and to what extent?
- What is the magnitude of DA for different protected characteristics?
- Are there predictors of success in dental assessment?
- Which assessment types might show the biggest performance differential?
- To what extent might DA differ between different dental schools?
- Does DA exist at the item level, highlighting some areas, such as communication skills, more affected than others?

If DA exists, does the curricula increase, decrease, or make no difference to the level of DA seen between the start and end of the programme?

This is secondary data research using quantitative examination and demographic data. Hypothesis testing will be carried out and any correlation between variables will be determined using linear modelling.

A systematic review of the literature has been carried out. Findings suggest that significant differences in achievement, based on student characteristic, do exist. Eleven papers fitted the inclusion criteria. Increasing age may have a bearing on performance, both in a positive and negative direction. Gender may influence, with females students outperforming males. Being native to their country of study created a moderately positive influence in clinical and written examinations. Self-reported ethnicity created a lowered odds ratio of success, with Caucasian students twice as likely to pass their dental licensing exam as their Asian peers.

Data for the research project has been gathered. Cleaning and organisation is largely complete. Descriptive statistics are currently being collated. By the conference date, the primary part of the inferential statistical analysis will be completed and a summary will be available.

I would like to discuss the implications of the findings with the group. I am interested in using any advice and suggestions to formulate a plan for what the next steps are for us in our institute and for dental education as a whole.

References (maximum three)

The full systematic review protocol is registered here PROSPERO ([york.ac.uk](https://www.york.ac.uk/prospero/))

The systematic review findings were presentation at the Annual Dental Education Conference in Liverpool, August 2023 Learning Toolbox ([ltb.io](https://www.ltb.io/))