

BAOMS Position Statement on 'Medical Practitioners working in OMFS including removing teeth'.



Drafted by Ian Martin (Chair of Council) and circulated in March 2008
Supported by the letter from Mr Duncan Rudkin (Chief Executive and Registrar for the GDC)

The practice of oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMFS) by non-GDC medical registrants

Background

In response to a number of queries raised in relation to the effects of the 2005 Statutory Instrument, which amends The Dentists Act 1984 (the Act), the GDC has published a statement¹, seeking to clarify its position in relation to the "practice of dentistry". The GDC paper also seeks to define the scope of practice permitted under the "medical task" exemption, for non-GDC registrants. At present all consultant OMF surgeons on the GMC specialist list are required to hold dental registration. Whilst the necessity for dental registration as a pre-requisite for OMFS specialist registration with the GMC is presently under review, this paper does not address any potential future implications for non-GDC registrants in consultant OMFS posts.

The GDC statement on the practice of dentistry

Of relevance to the practice of OMFS the statement states:

*"The Act does not define "medical task". However there may be situations where a task that would otherwise constitute the practice of dentistry might be considered a medical task for the purposes of the Act (for example in the course of emergency care **OR** (my emph.) Oral and Maxillofacial treatment). In determining this, the context of care will be an important factor."*

The statement does not provide a definition of OMF treatment. However, the GDC's position with regard to the definition of the practice of dentistry is: "that which is normally practised by dentists". Applying the same logic, the practice of OMFS should be defined as: "that which is normally practised by OMF surgeons". Further guidance is available from the Post Graduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) approved curriculum for OMFS.²

The scope of practice encompassed by OMFS defined in the curriculum, and normally practised by OMF surgeons, includes (*inter alia*): surgical removal of teeth, intra-oral soft tissue procedures, dental extractions and implantology. The scope is not restricted to more advanced surgical procedures for facial trauma, oncology or facial deformity which fall solely within the remit of OMFS. It should be noted that there is some overlap between the curriculum for OMFS and dentistry as published within the GDC document "The first five years", however the surgical removal of teeth is not part of the undergraduate dental curriculum.

BAOMS Council Position

The Council of BAOMS has considered the GDC statement with great care. It is the opinion of Council that a non-GDC registrant who is a registered medical practitioner, acting in the capacity of a trainee or locum, under the supervision of a consultant in OMFS, should be entitled, by virtue of the "medical tasks" exemption, to practice OMFS without fear of prosecution.

For further clarification, the view of the Council of BAOMS is that medical (non-GDC) registrants, should be entitled under the existing legislation to practice the full scope of OMFS, including the surgical removal of teeth and dental extractions, provided a) this is undertaken under the auspices of a hospital department of oral and maxillofacial surgery, and b) under appropriate supervision of and delegation from a consultant OMF surgeon, and c) the practitioner only undertakes treatments where they are competent to do so. Council would not support a non-GDC registrant undertaking dental extractions or other dental procedures as an independent High Street practitioner.

¹ <http://www.gdc-uk.org/NR/rdonlyres/563578AC-10D2-4A8B-A3FF-6B029F5E772E/76102/Practiceofdentistrystatement.doc>
² <http://www.iscp.ac.uk/Syllabus/Overview.aspx?enc=IkC9R8V0UhqYwUJWLf7uSFGHkUwSFKlosHepYhBHhX0=>