

BAOMS Statement on Dentists Working in/ re-deployed in Medical Specialties (including OMFS) based on meetings with General Dental Council 2016.

P Magennis – BAOMS Chair March 2020

From time to time concerns are raised about dentists working in medical specialties and their risk of ‘scope of practice’ complaints with the General Dental Council. The following advice was written in conjunction with the GDC in 2016 after the BAOMS Chair and Deputy Chair discussed our concerns, at length, in a face to face meeting and in subsequent e-mail correspondence with Janet Collins (GDC - Head of Standards) and Matthew Hill (GDC - Director of Strategy).

Examples of dentists working in medical specialties would include Dental Core Trainees, SAS grade dentists or consultants in the dental specialties employed within the medical specialty of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) or dentists who work within or provide cross-cover for another medical specialty such as Dermatology, Ear Nose and Throat or Emergency Medicine.

Advice for dentists working in medical specialties e.g. OMFS or ENT

All dentists working in NHS hospitals/Trusts should make sure they are fully compliant with their employer’s requirements for mandatory training and appraisal. They should understand and be compliant with the governance framework of that institution or training programme.

All dentists must work within the GDC document ‘Standards for the Dental Team’. This applies even when the team in which they are working is medical.

Attention was directed to standard 7.2.1 that as a dentist “You must only carry out a task or a type of treatment if you are appropriately trained, competent, confident and indemnified”.

The full document ‘Standards for the Dental Team’ can be downloaded from <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Standards/Pages/standards.aspx> the contents of which are summarised as:

- 1 Put patients’ interests first
- 2 Communicate effectively with patients
- 3 Obtain valid consent
- 4 Maintain and protect patients’ information
- 5 Have a clear and effective complaints procedure
- 6 Work with colleagues in a way that is in patients’ best interests
- 7 Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills
- 8 Raise concerns if patients are at risk
- 9 Make sure your personal behaviour maintains patients’ confidence in you and the dental profession.

Advice for doctors who are not GDC registrants working with dentists in their medical specialty

If your role involves supervising dentist within a medical specialty, you should be familiar with the dental regulator’s (General Dental Council) document ‘Standards for the Dental Team’ <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Standards/Pages/standards.aspx>

Although all the standards apply you should pay particular attention to:

“Standard 6.3 You must delegate and refer appropriately and effectively”

And

“7.2 Work within your knowledge, skills, professional competence and abilities”.

Failure to provide appropriate supervision, an efficient and effective route for delegation/referral and effective support for dentists working in your team could put you in breach of General Medical Council standards.