

A comparison of the proportion of graduates from Bristol and from other UK dental schools attaining postgraduate qualifications

Joanna Selby and Joshua Layton



The aim of this study was to gain information on postgraduate qualifications attained by dentists who graduated between the years of 2000 and 2009. By analysing this information, we aimed to examine: the proportion of graduates from each dental school who had progressed to postgraduate study, what area and level of postgraduate study they achieved, and the proportion of men and women within these two domains.

Information about graduates from all UK dental schools that qualified between 2000-2009 was obtained. The GDC is the only institution that has access to all of this information and they were approached. A member of the GDC staff collected the information from the database and forwarded the data so that it could be ordered and analysed. The information was delivered in an anonymous format within the framework for data protection. We were informed that the GDC had ceased collecting information in this manner after 2006. The data from 2005-2006 had very few records because graduates had insufficient time to complete a postgraduate qualification in the year that the GDC ended collecting that information. Thus the data-set used for the majority of the analysis extended from 2000-2004.

Our results provide clear rankings and trends for postgraduate qualifications gained by UK graduates. Relative to other UK dental schools (2000-2004), Bristol had the most graduates who chose to pursue postgraduate study (39%). Bristol also had the highest percentage of females completing postgraduate study (45%). The most popular postgraduate subjects for newly qualified dentists were MFDS and MFGDP(UK).

In a similar study by Stephens et al. (2003), from 1984-1993, the dental school with the largest percentage of graduates with a postgraduate qualification was London (all schools) with 29.4%, closely followed by Bristol with 29.0%. Bristol had the largest proportion of males with postgraduate qualifications (35%) and a moderate proportion of females (22%). The same proportion of graduates (24%) overall are completing postgraduate study as they were between 1984-1993; however, this has shifted from more male to more female graduates.

This study provides insight into the more recent proportions of dental graduates' decisions on undertaking postgraduate study. The findings show a movement of the profession from a male-dominated towards a larger female representation.