

# Developing a National Dental Education Research Strategy: Priorities, Barriers and Enablers

Ajjawi et al. (2017)

<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/7/3/e013129.full.pdf>

## For which topic were research priorities identified?

dental education

## In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Europe - United Kingdom

## Why was it conducted at all?

Having an explicit research strategy, against which research gains may be measured, is one of the markers of a 'vital and sustainable' research environment as stipulated by the UK Research Excellence Framework 2014. While various priority-setting exercises (PSEs) have been published for medical education research (MER) across numerous countries<sup>6-8</sup> and for primary dental research, to the best of our knowledge, none have been published for dental education research (DER).

## What was the objective?

to identify national dental education research priorities for the next 3-5 years and to identify barriers and enablers to dental education research priorities

## What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 24 research topics

## How long did the research prioritization take?

Survey 1: June 2014 - September 2014. Survey 2: October 2014 - January 2015

## Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

survey

## How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: qualitative online questionnaire: participants were asked what they thought the top three DER priorities in Scotland were over the next 3-5 years and why these were perceived to be the top priorities. Step 2: data processing: thematic analysis. Step 3: quantitative online questionnaire: survey with list of 24 items, participants were asked to rate each item, to identify top 5 priorities out of the list and to state why priority

## Which stakeholders took part?

Dental professions (e.g., dentistry, dental nursing and dental hygiene), learners, clinicians, educators, managers, researchers and academics. 85 stakeholders participated in the qualitative survey and 650 stakeholders participated in the quantitative survey.

## How were stakeholders recruited?

Maximum variation sampling was used for both stages as it was recognised that different stakeholder groups may have differing perspectives with regards to priorities for DER. The research team, in collaboration with DERG, identified a named lead for each region of Scotland involved in dental education. DERG helped identify key stakeholder groups across Scotland, including individuals from urban, rural and remote settings. For Stage 1, DERG members and the named leads for each region nominated individuals (within each of the stakeholder groups) whom they felt had sufficient knowledge of DER to answer open-ended questions about priorities, barriers and enablers. multiple recruitment methods were used. These included: (1) emails sent from academic leads at each institution, from the Scottish Dental Practice Based Research Network and to individuals on the Scottish dental-related NES email lists; (2) posters and flyers at each academic institution (including a link to the online questionnaire); (3) personal endorsements from institutional leads at lectures, meetings and training sessions; (4) flyers sent to all dental practices in Scotland and an article in the NHS 'Mouthpiece Extra' newsletter; (5) information on the Centre for Medical Education, Scottish Dental and Scottish Oral Health Collaboration websites and (6) snowballing through individuals working in dentistry or dental care professionals.

## Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.