



DEVELOPING EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE (DEMEC)

Kim Walker and Anita Laidlaw attended DEMEC in Manchester in December. The conference was sold out with over 800 in person delegates together with 500 online delegates. All the major educational organisations were represented together with other exhibitors. There were 5 plenaries, 64 parallel sessions and 200+ digital posters. One of most interesting plenaries was by Dr Vivienne Ming on the opportunities and limitations of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Kim Walker as PI of the Scottish Doctors Wellbeing Study, together with colleagues Gill Aitken (Edinburgh) and Lindsey Pope (Glasgow), facilitated a workshop on the findings of the study entitled “Heard, Valued, Supported: the role of medical education in doctors wellbeing”. After the initial presentation, over 50



participants discussed interventions developed to support wellbeing and how they are perceived by both the individual and the organisation. This work was funded by the CSO rapid research grant and the Scottish Medical Education Research Consortium.

At DEMEC Anita Laidlaw presented some preliminary findings from a scoping review examining the experiences of doctors with disabilities within a panel discussion. The scoping review was funded by an ASME GMC Excellence award which Katie Gibson Smith was PI on, and which Marianna Dworakowska was researcher on. Dr Caroline Bonner from the Disabled Doctors Network

(<https://www.disableddoctorsnetwork.com/>) was another panel member who described their lived experience, and the session was chaired by Dr Grainne Kearney from Queens University Belfast.



CHERI RUNS INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL EDUCATION TEACHING SESSION FOR MBChB STUDENTS

CHERI recently developed and ran an introductory half day session for year three MBChB students during their humanities SSC in medical education. MBChB students who go out to schools to deliver teaching also attended the session.

The session was styled around a Medical Education Conference format and aimed to ensure participants became familiar with different approaches used within medical education research, including appropriate research methods for different medical education research

questions. It also aimed to support participants to understand the various career opportunities available to them to get involved in medical education research. In the first part, attendees got to plan their own research project and gave feedback to the whole group. The second part consisted of short talks from people who have had varying routes into medical education research, for example a PhD student, a clinician, a medical student to illustrate the opportunities that are available. A lively debate followed with lots of questions, interaction and discussion. Feedback from students showed that they enjoyed and learned from the experience.



‘I extremely enjoyed the conference that was held in the 2nd last week of our teaching block. I really enjoyed getting to find out other people’s journeys and experiences to medical teaching and what my future career could look like.’

‘The Medical Education Conference also provided a great opportunity to learn more about how different clinicians and educators incorporate Medical Education into their careers.’



The CHERI team would be happy to discuss a bespoke half day with any interested departments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New PhD Student

Leen Habboub has joined CHERI as a PhD student. Her research focuses on bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in tooth morphology among dental students.

Leen graduated as a dentist from the University of Jordan. She was working as a general dentist in private dental clinics when her interest in dental education developed.

As a PhD candidate, Leen aims to understand how theoretical knowledge of tooth morphology translates into hands-on skills. Her goal is to understand the relationship between tooth morphology knowledge and practical skills, as well as the reasons for that relationship, in order to improve dental education and provide valuable recommendations to dental education stakeholders on how to improve curricula for superior outcomes and high-quality dental graduates, which ultimately leads to better patient care.

Outside her academic pursuits, Leen finds joy in various activities. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, drawing, walking on the beach, discovering new places to visit, and catching up with friends.



Leen Habboub

New Research Fellow

Jialing Ma joined CHERI as a research fellow responsible for investigating job embeddedness and success of academic GPs using realistic evaluation that combines interviews and surveys.

Prior to this, she studied age differences in storytelling from the perspective of social cognition for her PhD thesis in the School of Psychology at the University of Aberdeen. She explored multiple psychological dimensions of story content in different social settings and the interactions with age to have more contextualised understanding to storytelling. She studied intergenerational interactions using a social psychology perspective for her master's degree in Education at the University of Hong Kong. During her master's degree, she explored the mechanisms through which older adults could promote social capital for young adults. Her undergraduate training in Educational Psychology area focused on children's psychological health.

In her free time, Jialing enjoys gardening, exploring research advancements in psychological health, and learning about traditional Chinese Medicine.



Jialing Ma

SCHOOL HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH GROUP

The next meeting for SHERG has been pencilled for Friday 29th March with a discussion and seminar from Jonathan Vincent from the University of Lancaster. The time and location are still to be confirmed and will be circulated. If you would like to join the group please email ruth.obrien@abdn.ac.uk to find out more information

MARCH CHERI BLOSSOM SEMINAR

The CHERI Blossom March Seminar will be delivered by Ian Atherton, Senior Lecturer at Napier University, with the title 'Linking data for nursing education and workforce research'.

Ian is interested in the transformative potential of education. He has written on pedagogy in nurse education, and on the population health in pre-registration curriculum. He works closely with colleagues internationally to encourage person centred learning through flipped classroom approaches.

More details can be found on the following link:

Iain Atherton (napier.ac.uk)

The meeting will be hybrid in-person (Polwarth room 1:029) and on Teams (details below).

Microsoft Teams meeting

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 362 608 426 556

Passcode: oJcHHB



Ian Atherton

CHERI BLOSSOM FEBRUARY SEMINAR – ADARSH SHAH

Adarsh Shah presented his seminar on title “Complexity in curriculum reform: A qualitative case study of the Scottish “Improving Surgical Training” pilot.”

Adarsh’s PhD research project was a qualitative exploratory case study, underpinned by social

constructivism to explore the factors which impacted on the success (or otherwise) of implementing “Improving Surgical Training” in Scotland. Adarsh condensed his PhD into a succinct summary which highlighted the complex nature of the development and implementation of national level

curricular reform in the postgraduate medical realm. Excellent questions from the audience signposted future areas for research on this topic. The seminar was recorded therefore please contact ruth.obrien@abdn.ac.uk for access. For those interested in this subject area, see the publications from Adarsh:



Adarsh Shah

Shah AP, Walker KA, Walker KG, Cleland J. Context matters in curriculum reform: An analysis of change in surgical training. *Med Educ.* 2023; 57(8): 741-752. doi: [10.1111/medu.15071](https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.15071)

Shah, A.P., Cleland, J., Hawick, L. et al. Integrating simulation into surgical training: a qualitative case study of a national programme. *Adv Simul* 8, 20 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41077-023-00259-y>

Shah AP, Walker KA, Hawick L, Walker KG, Cleland J. Scratching beneath the surface: How organisational culture influences curricular reform. *Med Educ.* 2023; 57(7): 668-678. doi: [10.1111/medu.14994](https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.14994)

Shah, A.P., Walker, K.A., Walker, K.G. et al. “It’s making me think outside the box at times”: a qualitative study of dynamic capabilities in surgical training. *Adv in Health Sci Educ* 28, 499–518 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-022-10170-2>



DATES TO REMEMBER

| Date | Online / in-person | Time | Presenter | Title |
|----------|--|-------|---|---|
| 21/03/24 | Hybrid – Teams and Polwarth room 1:029 | 1-2pm | Ian Atherton Senior Lecturer at Napier University | ‘Linking data for nursing education and workforce research’. Microsoft Teams meeting: Join on your computer, mobile app or room device Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 362 608 426 556 Passcode: oJcHHB Download Teams |



Get to know...

Peter Johnston**1. Could you tell us about your role at the university?**

My current role is of an Hon Professor. I was given this title in 2016. As such, I am involved in medical education research via the Centre for Healthcare Education, Research and Innovation (CHERI). I am also, since 2020, the interim director of the Scottish Medical Education Research Consortium (SMERC). Through these roles, I am the co-chair of the UKMED Research Group, which enable access to the UKMED database and provides governance around related processes.

My research interests are in medical career decision making, workplace culture and wellbeing. I am also involved in undergraduate medical teaching with lectures and informal sessions in year one and with students on placements in the Pathology Department.

2. What's the most exciting part of your job?

It is hard to be definitive about this. The daily business of diagnosing patients' conditions and being involved in their immediate management remains a source of great interest. Seeing the effects of education and training on undergraduates and postgraduates is also very satisfying – creating opportunities for people to develop to their potential is very rewarding, especially when they are able to perform at a higher level than I have been able to achieve.

3. What brought you to the University of Aberdeen?

A bus would be the flippant answer to this question. Being brought up in Ellon and schooled mostly in Aberdeen, it was entirely natural for me to go to our local university. Although I have applied for posts

elsewhere, I have always felt very rooted in Aberdeen and the Northeast of Scotland. The need to interact with people from across the whole country and internationally has always been apparent and has, through a variety of opportunities I have had and continue to have, been an important part of what I do and how I do it. Being in one place provides a long view – looking beyond is important, however, and bring different perspectives.

4. What are your special areas of interest?

I have been interested in education throughout my career. It probably stemmed from my final year elective when I spent a couple of months at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. They were the first, as far as I am aware, to use problem based learning in a medical setting and it tweaked my curiosity. I have been interested in teaching ever since. Firstly, this was focused on undergraduates and later moved to the postgraduate medical education sector. During the transition I became interested in recording innovations with which I had been involved and this developed into education research. Within that, the move to the current structure of medical career around 2007-8, led to an interest in understanding how to help inform trainees around career choices and the decisions they needed to make to enable their ambitions. Our work in this area has become more sophisticated as we understand better the complexity of the environment and the influences on individuals.

The relationship between trainees, progression through programmes and the learning/working environment became a focus as we began to understand the factors involved in progression. This resulted in a number of interesting studies. The importance of workplace culture surfaced in this context. When COVID-19 came along,

we felt the changes in the workplace that were implemented could have profound effects on the way people felt about their work and their learning. This grew into a major study.

At the same time, driven by the work we had done, the need for researcher capacity building became more and more apparent. SMERC has been a body in which I have invested a lot of time over the last 15 years with the dual aim of producing high quality medical education research in Scotland and in growing our capacity to do so sustainably.

My work in pathology is mostly centred on diagnostic cellular pathology particularly in haematological malignancy. This remains a major source of interest, challenge and reward. I continue to be involved in work at the Royal College of Pathologists – I currently chair the Scotland Regional Council, am a member of Council and the Trustee

Board and am involved in developing strategies and policies.

5. What are your work priorities at the moment?

It is about balance – the service work is ever more time consuming and our departmental resources continue to be challenged by the workload, its increasing expectations and complexity of the information we deliver. In many ways this is positive because it reinforces the value to patients of what we do, however, resources have not grown in line with demand. At the same time, maintaining the availability of opportunities to be involved and to become involved in high quality medical education research remain a priority.

6. What future projects would you like to be involved in?

I think there is need for some reflective work around what has been

achieved by the changes in medical education over the last 20 years, how the culture in the NHS and, indeed the higher education sector, affects medical education and how, with these factors in mind, we might be able to influence the future positively.

7. Do you have a mantra both professionally and personally?

“The NHS is about people, for people, by people!”

8. How do you like to relax outside work?

I have the great good fortune to have my close family nearby – we spend a lot of time involved in family activities. I enjoy travel and I like my shed and the garden in which I make and repair things; and grow things with variable success. I enjoy being involved with the Gordonian Rugby Football Club.

9. Do you have any hidden talents or fun facts about yourself?

Far be it for me to make that call!

