

BSP Undergraduate Group Meeting -14 June 2019

Having got to know each other via the Undergraduate Facebook group, it was brilliant to finally meet all the other BSP Undergraduate Reps in London and put faces to names. After a pretty rainy start upon arrival at Guy's Campus, King's College London - we were keen to introduce ourselves and put nerves to one side. We were all so enthusiastic to get to know each other and quick to share our mutual passion for all things dentistry – in particular Perio! We soon found that the BSP is a highly friendly and nurturing society - inclusive of all! It was great to meet representatives from all over the country, from Portsmouth to even as far north as Stornoway!

The day started with Professor West discussing her vision and ideas for the future of the BSP UG group. Her excitement really electrified the room and got us all feeling the same way. This was followed by Dominic Clark-Roberton, Chair of the UG group, who from start to finish, was charismatic and an excellent speaker. At this point Dom led us out onto campus for a classic ice-breaker challenge, which was a fun way to learn more about our peers and revealed Dr Ian Dunn watches Love Island, who can blame him! We headed back inside and began discussing ideas we had for the UG BSP Group, areas which as individuals we felt we needed further support on and quickly realized that there were issues that more than one individual could relate to. It soon became apparent that more integration is needed between dental students and dental hygiene therapy students; it was really interesting to hear each other's perspective in the discussions we had. We felt the necessity to have a clear understanding of each other's scope of practice and remits, something which will benefit the whole team. The friendly and relaxed tone of the meeting followed throughout the day. We were able to express and share our enthusiasm when discussing ways to promote 'Gum Health Day' on the 12th May 2020 – the ideas shared were brilliant, from spin the wheel freebies to a personalized snapchat filter which would allow the public to see on themselves the catastrophic effect of periodontitis.

Moving on from the discussion, it was the turn of Dr Ian Dunn to talk to us about communication - highlighting the importance of tailoring each appointment for each individual patient and the importance of 'motivational interviewing' – something which a lot of us had not heard of before, it enables us to integrate our patients needs with how we can help them as a clinician. Dr Dunn's clinical cases were some incredible evidence of this put into practice - showing us the power we have as students to change a patient's attitudes towards their oral health by simply making them understand the nuances of periodontal disease. As well as how to approach the topic, making it less patronizing but a more relaxed approach on grey-areas such as how to tell your patient they aren't brushing effectively. His excellent analogies when explaining to patients the importance of their own efforts certainly did not go amiss and are things we can use with our own patients back on Clinic. The "rock in the river" analogy was one which made us giggle and another favourite (although as he humbly conceded, not his own) was 'patients have to have a longer tooth or tooth no longer!' when describing the recession we see after successful periodontal treatment. The passion of Professor Nicola West, Dr Ian Dunn and Dom was brilliantly engaging and welcoming, highlighting how approachable everyone in the BSP is and making the society unique because of its family feel. Everyone is part of it for the same purpose, but each person brings their own unique perspective and life experience to it.

After disbanding, we made our way to The Houses of Parliament for a guided tour which was absolutely incredible! Not only was our student group in attendance but members of the BSP who later that evening were to attend a dinner to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Society, many of whom I recognized from papers and publications - so it was safe to say I was star struck! We were lucky enough to visit both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Before the evening ended, we the students got together again and made our way to get a well-deserved pizza to finish off the day. You would have presumed that we would run out of things to talk about? But we hadn't, the energetic atmosphere continued. After enjoying our food, one by one we said our farewells until the next BSP meeting.

The first BSP undergraduate meeting allowed us like-minded individuals from every corner of the country (quite literally!) to share our passion and ideas for all things periodontology, a valuable tool which in the future will allow us to expand our knowledge and promote the BSP as well as encouraging other students to go on to join groups such as 'The Early Careers group'. It is fair to say it had been a success. Seeing the excitement of each member of the BSP throughout the day really solidified the foundation of an excellent UG group of students. Although it was the first time we met each other, it's evident that we have made some lifelong friends amongst the group. We would both like to thank everyone who is part of the group, whether you made it down to London or not, for being such a weird and wonderful bunch and look forward to meeting you all again soon.

Written by BSP Undergraduate Representatives:

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