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| Host department: QMUL |
| Project Title: |
| The implementation of clinical guidelines in primary dental care  |
| Proposed supervisory team:  |
| Professor Eduardo Bernabe is Professor of Dental Public Health and Honorary Academic Consultant for the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), with expertise in oral health inequalities, implementation research and advanced data modelling. Dr Nilufar Ahmed is Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences at University of Bristol. She is an advanced qualitative researcher with a multidisciplinary academic training in Psychology, Sociology, Gerontology, and Human Geography. She is active in community work and her research uses coproduction with community members and students as coresearchers.Professor Nikolaos Donos is Professor & Chair of Periodontology and Implant Dentistry, Director of Research and Director Centre for Oral Clinical Research, with significant clinical and research experience on treatment modalities to patients suffering from severe periodontal disease.Dr Ana Beatriz Gamboa is Senior Lecturer in Periodontology at University of Bristol. She is an experienced periodontologist with research work and practice in primary care.  |
| Potential for cross consortium networking and educational opportunities: |
| The PhD will involve close working with NHS dentists in primary care and will help the student build relationships with professional and academic networks. More broadly, the student will be exposed to the range of research projects hosted in the Centre for Dental Public Health and Primary Care at QMUL.  |
| Project description: |
| BackgroundClinical guidelines are developed to inform clinical decision-making and practice. While these guidelines are welcome to improve the management of oral diseases, it is not clear how they have been perceived and applied (if at all) by dental care teams working in NHS primary care. Changing patient care in response to new recommendations has conventionally been considered a professional expectation. The onus falls on individual clinicians, who are too often considered passive actors in the adoption of guideline recommendations. Furthermore, patient perceptions of the appropriateness and acceptability of these changes is rarely considered. Many clinicians can and do change their practice, and well-informed patients adhere to recommendations if they perceive net benefits over harms. However, improving health outcomes at scale requires more than assiduous clinicians and patients. Simple dissemination of information has rarely been effective in changing clinical practices and behaviour. This is the well-known gap between knowledge creation and implementation in healthcare settings. Although clinical guidelines are welcome, work is needed for their full implementation in primary care. Aim of the projectThe aim of this project is to evaluate the implementation of the clinical guidelines for the treatment of common oral diseases in NHS primary dental care practices in East London. MethodsThis is a mixed-methods study to be carried out among general dental practices in East London and Sussex. The study will include four interrelated work packages: (i) an evaluation of the extent of implementation of the clinical guidelines among clinical teams, (ii) an exploration of the barriers and facilitators for their implementation, (ii) the co-design of an intervention strategy to address perceived barriers to implementation, and (iv) a feasibility trial to evaluate the implementation strategy.  |
| Indicative project costs:  |
| Funding is available for tuition fees, training and research costs, as per SCPR [guidance](https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/career-development/the-doctoral-training-programme-for-primary-care-clinicians/frequently-asked-questions). |
| Training and development provision by host: |
| *Formal training:*QMUL has an extensive career development programme to support PhD students. At the start of the PhD, we will undertake a training needs assessment to build a formal training package to support the student. This may include attendance at training courses on qualitative and quantitative methods. The PhD student will also be encouraged to consider training courses within and outside QMUL that will benefit their wider development. |
| *Informal training:* The PhD will be carried out within a supportive multi-disciplinary environment that includes epidemiologists, consultants in periodontology and dental public health, behavioural scientists and data analysts. The team has considerable expertise and collaborations both within the UK and internationally. There are many opportunities to attend seminars and lectures within the Institute of Dentistry, the School of Medicine and Dentistry and the wider University. |
| *PPIE*: The candidate will have the opportunity to consult existing PPI groups at QMUL and develop the project together with PPI members. |