

## **Review of Specialist Registration Standard**

July, 2014

I would like to make a comment regarding the Dental Board of Australia's Specialist Registration Standard in particular in regards to the speciality of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. The speciality of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery is a dual specialty in medicine and dentistry; and this has been the minimum standard for registration for Australian trained graduates since 1996. Unfortunately it seems that the specialists' standards of the Australian Dental Board do not reflect this fact. In particular, the standards used for applicants requesting limited registration for teaching and research simply state "for specialists, the minimum requirement is four years general training and two years post-general qualification practice, plus a three year full-time course in a dental speciality." This does not reflect the requirements for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery registration. Currently the requirement for dual qualification is the minimum requirement in Australia, UK, numerous states of the USA, and will become the minimal requirement in the future for the rest of the first world nations. Furthermore, there has been a recent case where an individual with overseas dental qualifications have been registered as a specialist Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon by the Dental Board, this again does not reflect the current accepted Australian standard for our local graduates.

Due to the change of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery into a dual speciality in dentistry and medicine, there seems to have been a push within Australia to promote the speciality of Oral Surgery, as a specialty in Dentistry alone. This does not fit with current trends in the rest of the first world countries and does not seem to be supported by workforce requirements either. I would suggest that the current and future levels of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons available, as we continue to train and graduate well trained surgeons around Australia and New Zealand, will be more than sufficient to address any projected increases in population. Currently, in my private practice, anecdotally, it seems that some patients have a harder time getting back to see their general dental practitioners than back to see me. Also as more graduates in this field are produced, the issue of "competition" will also be addressed. Furthermore, I would also suggest that Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons have more specialists working in the public sector per capita than any other dental speciality. Furthermore, if the specialty field of Oral surgery is promoted will these specialists be on call 24 hours a day to address any post-operative complications, or emergency cases, that they may have, as Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery have provided for decades? Further will these single qualified Oral Surgeons be able to be credentialed in the public and private hospitals for operative and admission rights? Also currently, general dentists with an interest and training in oral surgery are already practising dento-alveolar surgery, and therefore would another speciality in this area serve any actual purpose?

Therefore, I implore the Dental Board of Australia to formally rectify guidelines as appropriate to recognise the special case of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery as a dual Dental and Medical Specialty. And to abolish Oral Surgery as a separate sub-

speciality as there seems to be no requirement for it in the current Australian Healthcare landscape.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Edward Hsu  
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon

