Career Decisions of First Year Oral Health Science Students at Griffith University

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Career Decisions of First Year Oral Health Science Students at Griffith University,

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Introduction,
Many first year dental and oral health students were absent from class on the day of the Undergraduate Medical and Health Science Admission Test (UMAT) in July 2009. Academics in the School wondered why the students were sitting this test so decided to research the issue.

Methods,
A survey was developed and administered to all students enrolled in first year DOH coded courses in Semester 2 2009. These students were studying dental science, oral health therapy and dental technology.

Results,
A total of 116 first year oral health students participated in the survey, a response rate of 93%. Of these 82 (71%), were dental science (DSc) students, 25 (22%) were from oral health therapy (OHT) and 9 (8%) were from the Dental Technician (DT) program. More than a third (36%) of respondent opted to sit the UMAT in 2009. This also differed by program, with 29% of DSc sitting the UMAT, 56% of OHTs and 44% of DTs. DSc students chose to sit the UMAT to be closer to family, or apply to another dental school less expensive and possibly change careers completely. The other students generally sat UMAT to gain entry into the dental science program.

Conclusions,
36% of first year DOH students want to change careers.

Future Directions,
The findings of this research have ramifications for learning and teaching, admissions, external relations and marketing.

Opportunities for Collaboration in Health
Better collaboration with first year advisors (FYAs), admissions, external relations, marketing, and career counselors is required.