



**ADEE Site Visit  
to  
Yeditepe University, Faculty of Dentistry  
Istanbul, Turkey**

**14th -16th January, 2008**

## Visitors

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## Acknowledgement

The visiting team would like to thank students and staff of Yeditepe University Faculty of Dentistry (FoD), in particular the Dean, Prof. Türker Sandalli, for inviting an ADEE visitation and for their hospitality whilst we were undertaking the site visit. The self-assessment document supplied prior to the visitation was clear, detailed and informative and stimulated questions and discussion during the meetings at Yeditepe. We were pleased to be able to visit the main University campus and would like to thank the many staff there who showed us the facilities and willingly answered our many questions. In addition, the team have received further documentation subsequent to the visit, which has helped to clarify a number of issues.

## Introduction

The private University of Yeditepe is situated on the Asian side of Istanbul and is part of the Istanbul Education and Culture Foundation (ISTEK). There is very strong leadership from the president and founder, who was previously the mayor of Istanbul. This structure enables a clear process of decision making. The Dental Faculty lies a short distance (2-3km) away from the main campus, is one of three dental schools situated in Istanbul and the only private dental school in Turkey.

## Yeditepe Faculty of Dentistry

This private dental school was established in 1996 and is, therefore, a rather young institution. It is situated on the Asian side of Istanbul. A new, additional, building is underway on the European side of Istanbul (5km from the dental school) and is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2008. This will provide a training facility for dental hygienists, expanded facilities for dental nurse training (up to 100 places) as well as provision for Post Graduate (PG) students. The basic layout of the interior is in place, but the finishing and equipping is yet to be completed.

We were impressed with the facilities in the Faculty, which are outstanding, and with the amount of available space and the general cleanliness within the school.

The School is determined to be the best in all areas of academic and clinical dentistry within Turkey and one of the best in Europe.

There is a very positive and friendly atmosphere within the School and we did not experience any frictions or tensions during the visit.

## **Faculty mission and vision**

The mission and vision statements at departmental and dental school level are very positive, student oriented, in line with the vision of Yeditepe University and are entirely appropriate.

The school has a strategic plan which encompasses education, research and health services and is working on implementing this.

## **Faculty administration and commissions (committees)**

There is a clear departmental structure with strong leadership from the Dean. The heads of departments are full professors devoted to their tasks in education, research and patient care.

The dental education and teaching commission, established three years ago, has regular, weekly meetings, with student input once a month

## **Curriculum and general educational approach**

The general educational approach at the school is in line with ADEE. The ADEE documents on profile and competences, curriculum structure and quality assurance and benchmarking have been used as guiding documents in restructuring the dental curriculum. In particular, the ADEE profile and competences document has been used to inform discussions within the Faculty and we appreciate that the curriculum is being aligned with this.

The educational committee, which was established in 2003-4, has devoted a substantial amount of time over a period of three years to developing a changed curriculum which incorporates vertical and horizontal integration of the courses, moving away from the previous discipline-based approach. This approach is bringing the curriculum into line with the ADEE.

The committee carried out a SWOT analysis in 2006 across all subject areas and this has been used for strategic planning. It is anticipated that further analysis will be used to develop the strategic plans in the future.

They are to be congratulated on the comprehensive programme and course materials. Initially there was some confusion amongst the team about the new, transitional and old curricula and the links between them. However, discussions during the visit and new materials from the education committee have helped to clarify this. The new curriculum was initiated in 2006-7 and is currently being delivered to 1st year students. An improved (transitional) curriculum is currently being delivered to years 2,3,4 and 5. This incorporates case-based learning, some new interdisciplinary courses and a range of elective subjects. The curriculum continues to evolve year by year gradually incorporating the new curriculum. This has allowed some flexibility, but it is hoped that the long-term planning will now result in a more stable situation. Since our visit, an overall modular plan has been completed and this will be introduced completely by the year 2012. However, the whole curriculum will

need to be embedded in an ECTS structure. We are pleased that the curriculum is not stagnant and is future oriented in taking on board pedagogical issues

Through meetings with staff from all teaching areas, the visitors noted particular strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum as follows:

- We appreciate that there is a research track for students in the new curriculum. However, we recommend that this should culminate with a small research project for each student, which is an integral part of the course. This will enable students to understand the concepts of evidence based dentistry i.e. develop research skills and foster a spirit of enquiry. These skills are important in a professional context and they are more likely to be delivered in PBL than in traditional methods because of the intensity of research and discussion in PBL.
- We recommend that the elective component of the curriculum is strengthened in order to broaden students' academic attitude.
- We are pleased with the integrated clinical courses in the 4th and 5th year, which works well for the students and patients. However we recommend that later in the course that the introduction of part-time general dental practitioners as teachers might strengthen the delivery of this teaching. The advantage of the full time contract is that staff are dedicated to the School. However, the disadvantage of this is that part time practitioners are not available to support the comprehensive patient care programme.
- It was not clear how the basic and medical sciences would be integrated into the curriculum, but it now seems that they are embedded into years 1, 3 and 4
- The school is moving away from a lecture-based approach to one that is more student centred. It was apparent that this is appreciated by the students. We recommend that the school continues along this line whilst keeping abreast of educational developments. Additionally, elements of staff development and pedagogical support will be necessary in the future. Involvement in ADEE activities will help with this. It is quite difficult to identify from the course and module descriptions the problem-based approach to the course. The course and module descriptions could be improved by including reference to core learning materials and the balance of study time for students.

Although the curriculum has a PBL approach it is not clear if the students actually are empowered by the responsibility of their own learning.

- The school makes use of electronic learning and has very good IT support which is used on a daily basis in clinical areas. However, it is recommended that in the long term there should be more integration of these resources. The barcoveision system of links between surgery and lecture halls is to be commended.

- There is a clear code of conduct for students' behaviour and dress within the Faculty of Dentistry. This is seen as important to engender a sense of professionalism and is commended.
- There is a clear system for formative and summative assessment in place. We recommend the introduction of some multidisciplinary approaches to assessment in the future, while recognising the difficulties in doing this. In a student selfdirected learning context it is desirable that there is an alignment between aims and objectives, content, assessment and feed-back to students. We were pleased to note a good feedback system following formative and summative assessments. However, we assume that in the PBL approach, students will receive feedback more frequently than twice a year. We recommend that the assessment system be reviewed with a view to a clearer focus on a competence based approach as outlined by ADEE.

The visitors recognised that there would be an impact of increased numbers of patients in all teaching areas due to national changes in social security. For some areas this may be an opportunity for students to gain more experience with a wider case mix. However, in others it was felt that the balance of treatments might not be ideal and there could be delays in completing patients' treatment plans, due to the increased volume of patients in the hospital. It is important that the effect of these changes is monitored.

In some areas, a lack of administrative support and departmental secretaries was felt to be an issue. It is recommended that the administrative structure is examined and reorganised to provide the necessary support for academic staff. This is especially important if staff are expected to write research papers.

## **Facilities / Resources**

### Main campus

The campus is purpose-built and is laid out in a delightful setting on one of the hills in Istanbul. It is designed to be self-contained and amenities include student accommodation, restaurants, shops and sporting facilities. All buildings were designed to accommodate students with disabilities. The campus was relatively quiet during our visit because it was the vacation period for the majority of students. Dental students spend the majority of the week (four days) at the campus during first and second years and then move to spend the majority of their time at the Dental Faculty in subsequent years.

The laboratory facilities for Basic Medical Sciences teaching were spacious and well-equipped with a range of teaching aids from computer-based programmes to traditional anatomical models and microscopes. In addition, there is an animal house, which supplies several types of animals for experimentation.

These laboratory facilities are also used for research in genetic engineering and molecular diagnostics. In particular this laboratory was busy and has links with the Bioengineering faculty for some of the research programmes.

Other facilities on campus that were of note, were the Knowledge centre, covering two floors and housing 150,000 books and 58,000 on-line periodicals and despite the vacation period, being used fully by students. Also, a large auditorium, with seating available for 1,200 students and fantastic acoustics.

### Dental Faculty

There is plenty of space within the Dental Faculty for students (UG and PG) and all levels of staff. The new building planned for PG students and Dental Care Professionals will make a big difference to space within the current dental faculty.

Ground floor facilities include a medical centre, which is linked to the Yeditepe hospital and caters for medical emergencies. A variety of services are provided here. There is a restaurant facility available for staff, students and patients of the hospital. In addition, a swimming pool and fitness centre allows recreation and relaxation for staff and students of the hospital. Students are encouraged to use this in their spare time.

The Dental School and Hospital is housed from the first floor upwards. Initially the hospital had 70 students and as the numbers increased, the hospital expanded into a neighbouring building accessible via bridge access. Space is plentiful.

The Oral Diagnosis clinic is staffed by postgraduate students and staff, who undertake prosthetics, conservation and periodontology. There are supporting X-ray and technical facilities.

An excellent range of learning spaces are provided. Four lecture rooms, each specific to a particular cohort of students are available, alongside six seminar rooms and a large lecture theatre. First year students are provided with laboratory facilities for tooth morphology practicals and there is a 64 seated phantom head laboratory to support clinical skills teaching.

A range of excellent audio-visual and IT resources are available to support student learning, including Barcoveision links between surgeries and the lecture theatre.

The dental library, however, is rather small with only 4 computer terminals. Whilst the team recognised that excellent library facilities are available on campus and that many students use laptops, it was felt that the dental library should be further developed, particularly in light of the new PBL approach. We recommend a more imaginative use of some of the lecture space to address this.

However, A good range of standard, internationally recognised text books and some Turkish translations are available for students to support their learning in different subject areas.

There are separate study rooms for postgraduate students, junior staff and associate professors.

Undergraduate and postgraduate student offices deal with student records, which are kept both in paper form and electronically.

Clinical facilities are good. There is a total of 118 dental units spread across, Orthodontics, Paediatrics, Oral Diagnosis, Radiology, integrated clinical practice and postgraduate units. Students in 3rd, 4th and 5th year undertake integrated patient care. This is supported by staff from all departments, some nursing support (but in 5th year all students work with a nurse), X-ray facilities and electronic patient information on computers in each unit.

In general, the school has made the transition from ordinary X-ray use into fully digital X-ray facilities and has modern, up-to-date equipment.

Central Sterilisation facilities are available and are up-to-date (students purchase their own basic instruments at the beginning of the course and these are barcoded). Specialised instruments and equipment are provided. It is a 24-hour facility for all clinics, but is a little small now. However, we understand there are plans for expansion which will address this, with an associated small loss of clinic space.

The Children's and Orthodontic clinics have a row of dental units, without partitions. This seems to work well, however, there are some enclosed surgeries for particularly anxious patients and also for cleft lip & palate patients. Parents do not accompany their children into the surgery.

The oral surgery department has facilities for day-stay patients as well as routine appointments. A General Anaesthesia specialist attends weekly for the provision of care to anxious and special needs patients. We saw how the audio-visual links from this department to the lecture theatre enable students to participate in live discussion with the operating dentist. This is to be commended.

Consultant clinics are provided for staff to work in outside 9-5. Clinics take place after 5pm and also at weekends. Students may assist on a Saturday.

The top floor of the building provides excellent catering facilities in either canteen or restaurant settings for staff and student. These are also used for functions in the evenings and weekends.

#### Patients

The Hospital caters for **all** patients, social security and private. Initially patients are seen in oral diagnosis, in staff and student clinics. These encompass self-referred patients as well as those referred from outside dentists. The Hospital accepts all patients who want to be treated and approximately 60 new patients per day attend this area.

Patients are given the option of being treated by students or by staff (treatment by students is free).

The patient record system is currently being transferred from paper to electronic records and it is anticipated that this task will be completed in about 1 year.

#### Research facilities

There are a series of excellent research laboratories, situated in the Dental Faculty which are available to staff and PG students. The equipment is impressive, but we noted that the laboratories seemed a little under-used.

### Other issues

Staff and students identified problems with car parking, but we were assured that this will be addressed in the near future.

We noted that the Quality assurance system is in development.

We recommend that the ergonomic approach in pre-clinical and clinical dentistry is strengthened throughout the curriculum.

### Additional facilities

Across the drive from the dental school is another building which houses a pharmacy and a dermatology clinic, which works in close conjunction with the Dental school and the medical school of the university. Treatments such as Botox, dermabrasion etc are carried out here and the facility complements cosmetic dentistry procedures which are undertaken in the Dental Hospital.

As mentioned on page 2 of this report another building to be finished in May 2008 is under construction, mainly as a provision for PG students and training centre for the new school for Dental Nurses.

## **Personnel / Staffing**

The school is staffed by full time academics who have their contracts renewed every year. The salary level almost doubles that of state universities. The age distribution and gender balance of academic staff is appropriate. A number of the experienced older Turkish professors had spent a considerable part of their academic career at well reputed US Dental Schools. They now serve Yeditepe dental school with their expertise, which is to be commended. There is also a substantial group of young ambitious dentists, forming the future of the dental school.

The career pathway is clearly defined but not very flexible. There is an intention to orientate internationally. The staff seems enormously committed, has a positive spirit and is working together towards the mission and vision of the faculty

In terms of non-academic staff, a lack of secretarial support was identified. The school should reconsider the balance between supporting clinical and administrative personnel.

We appreciate their efforts in establishing the first dental hygiene school in Turkey and expanding the dental nurse training. We look forward to seeing how the Dental Faculty integrates the dental hygienists and dental nurses into the system (teamwork).

## **Students**

The Dental Faculty is able to select the top students who are well-educated; well-mannered and financially privileged (tuition fee is 25.000 US\$ a year). This is an unusual model for Europe.

There is student representation for each year group and an overall student representative who participates in university committees.

We met with a group of student representatives as well as having an opportunity to talk to students on clinics and were impressed with their motivation and enthusiasm for the course.

Students were extremely positive about the school. Many of them had researched widely about dental courses and chosen this one. A large proportion of the students come from a dental background, and parents are very supportive about the school. Students felt that the facilities and equipment were better than any other dental school in Turkey.

The student intake has increased and there are now between 41 and 67 students in each year, the first year comprises 67 students. There is a perception that the increased number of students has led to some crowding of facilities, but the planned expansion into a new building should alleviate these minor problems.

There are opportunities for exchange visits with other universities and these should be commended. We would encourage expansion of the exchange opportunities (for both staff and students). We recommend that the University continues the efforts of establishing exchange programs within Europe as they have received the Erasmus Charter in 2003.

The student workload appears appropriate. Students reported that they liked the small group teaching setting and the move to a problem-based curriculum. They were also very positive about the integrated clinics and felt this prepared them well for independent practise.

The level of assessment for students seems quite high, with each subject requiring a variety of formative and summative assessments as well as mid-term exams. The students are given feedback and an opportunity to discuss and understand their mistakes.

There is a small, but significant drop-out rate and we hope that the move to the new curriculum will have the effect of moving the drop-out to the end of first year in the main.

Students are fortunate in the recreational facilities available at the Faculty of Dentistry and also on the main university campus. There are a wide range of activities that are undertaken, from sport to music.

Students are able to participate in some research activities if they choose, in particular there is a research club and students are encouraged to prepare research conferences. However, this is not formally timetabled.

We commend positively on the plans to have a time-tabled research track in the curriculum ending with a research project for each student or pair of students.

## **Alumni, professional representatives**

The Faculty of Dentistry has a large number of postgraduate students, many of whom are Yeditepe graduates.

We appreciate the staff contribution to courses and lectures for CPD, but we recommend that an internal programme for staff development is implemented, both in dentistry and in education.

The Periodontology programme has been accredited by the European Association of Periodontology and we commend this.

There are currently some links with alumni, mainly through their PG programmes, but this could be developed. As this is a young school, this can be developed in the future.

## **Research**

With growing maturity and the new curriculum development, the Faculty of Dentistry has the opportunity to develop a strong research profile. We appreciate that they strive to lead in dental research in Turkey and for international involvement. It would appear that the School intends to move towards developing its research once the curriculum has been sorted out. It is to be hoped that the shift of staff focus towards research development should not take place at the expense of their obvious teaching quality.

There is strong support from the university for research, with a scheme of financial support for staff publishing papers. A central office at the main campus promotes collaborations within and outwith the university and also provides administrative support for staff undertaking research projects. A new initiative is planned to improve university and business links with the aim of providing a sustainable environment for research.

There are excellent research facilities within the school and the university, but these seem to be underused at the moment. Postgraduate students will develop both clinical and basic science skills during their programmes and it is hoped that this will help to build the research profile of the school. It is commended to develop a comprehensive research policy plan for the dental school.

It appears that the research projects which are being undertaken, tend to be limited to one speciality area and it is recommended that research themes are developed within the school which would enable collaboration and joint working between disciplines.

Students are encouraged to participate in research activity, but this is not embedded within the curriculum.

## **Oral Health Services / Social responsibility and national oral health policy**

Within Turkey, changes are planned in the Social Security system. All disciplines recognised that this will have an impact on patient load in the Dental Faculty and have identified the opportunities and threats that this will bring.

The Faculty undertakes proactive community engagement with a view to influence local oral health. Students are involved in oral health promotion and surveillance activities as part of their Dental Public Health teaching. This is to be commended.

## **Conclusions:**

The Faculty of Dentistry of Yeditepe University is a very modern, and most likely the most modern and advanced dental school in Turkey. The ADEE site-visitation team is impressed by the very adequate facilities and the quality of the educational programme. Over the last years tremendous progress has been made to meet the European Bologna requirements and to be in line with ADEE recommendations as far as The Profile and Competences are concerned, the curriculum content and structure and the implementation of ECTS and quality assurance. The selection system is such that only high quality students are being accepted. Also the personnel policy is such that quality is favoured over quantity. We understand that plans are in progress to further strengthen the research policy of the Faculty of Dentistry, given the excellent research facilities available. This will allow more internationally peer-reviewed research output and increased participation of students in research projects.

All these innovative actions will help to further stimulate student and staff exchange with other dental schools in Europe and in the rest of the world.

These positive developments in the Yeditepe University Faculty of Dentistry are the results of many contributing factors such as vision and strong leadership from the Dean, collegiality and good spirit among the staff and good communication and relationship with the central office of Yeditepe University.