



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.



# Professor David Locker Scholarship in Dental Public Health

Annual Report prepared for Martha Clarke

April 2018

**Sarab El Yousfi**  
PhD Dentistry, 2018

**Tom Broomhead**  
PhD Dentistry, 2018



### **Sarab El Yousfi**

PhD Dentistry, 2018

MDPH, Dental Public Health, 2010

Sarab El Yousfi: The Evaluation of oral health promotion approaches – Exploring participation as a new perspective for child oral health promotion

Supervisors: Dr Janine Owens and Professor Barry Gibson

I am very grateful to have been a recipient of the David Locker scholarship which helped me get through my PhD Degree, which I have recently been awarded in Dental Public Health.

My project was focused on oral health promotion in nurseries within the UK. Gaining an understanding of children's perspectives of oral health and understanding how they experience participation in oral health promotion may improve the quality of oral health promoting activities. Although there has been a strong call for participatory child-centred approaches, research is lacking with respect to children's participation. The aim of my study was to explore the dynamics and meaning of children's participation in an oral health promotion programme. It was an ethnographic case study which involved participant observations and semi-structured interviews.

I am currently working as a post-doc researcher on a UK nationwide trial focused on improving the oral health of adolescents living in deprived areas.

My PhD journey has given me opportunity to gain both skills related to my field and personal professional skills that I feel have prepared me for the role I am now currently undertaking.



### Tom Broomhead

PhD Dentistry, 2018

MSc Social and Spatial

Inequalities, 2011

BA Geography, 2009



Tom Broomhead – ‘Neighbourhood effects – spatial inequalities in oral health’

Supervisors: Professor Sarah Baker (School of Clinical Dentistry) and Dr Dimitris Ballas (Department of Geography)

My PhD was a collaborative effort between the School of Clinical Dentistry and the Department of Geography. The aim of the PhD was to explore how features of the neighbourhoods people live in may influence patterns of tooth decay in adults within Sheffield.

The conceptual basis of the PhD involved the use of a neighbourhood based theoretical framework. Through this, numerous pathways through which neighbourhoods may influence spatial inequalities in tooth decay were established. Novel simulation methods were then used to empirically test these. Spatial microsimulation for example was used to create a synthetic population of individuals for two study areas in Sheffield, and formed the basis of the agent-based models used in the research. These were used to dynamically simulate the effects of the theoretical pathways in the two study areas over a two-year period.

Perhaps the most obvious highlights of the PhD have been the new research skills I have gained and been able to apply. Beyond these, there have been many other positives that I will take from my postgraduate study. I have been able to travel to a number of different conferences and events at which I have had the opportunity to present my research. A particular highlight was presenting at the International Association of Dental Research in Seoul in June 2016. As well as presenting, many of these events have allowed me to make contact with, and share knowledge with numerous academics. Some of these meetings have also led to opportunities to submit papers for publication.

Another highlight has been the teaching opportunities I have been able to take advantage of. This has involved teaching students in both Dentistry and Geography, in subjects such as quality of patient care, statistics, GIS as well as interdisciplinary challenge weeks. I was also fortunate enough to help out on a geography fieldclass to Lesbos in March 2016.

All of these experiences have benefited me both personally and professionally, and have given me a greater overall knowledge of the workings of academia, and life as an academic.

The PhD has been greatly beneficial for my overall skills as a researcher and academic. I feel I have greatly increased my technical skills, including both data analysis and knowledge of computer coding. Just as importantly, I have become experienced in analysing theoretical content and applying this to my own work, in order to provide a solid grounding for my analyses. Previously my expertise had been in quantitative analysis, so the addition of these skills have made me a better-rounded researcher. Additionally, I have become far more adapt at writing in an academic style, as well as conveying complex information in an understandable way. This has already benefitted me in my career, and will continue to do so.

I feel I am also far abler to overcome new challenges individually. There were numerous occasions during the PhD where I was faced with new situations that were either conceptually or technically out of my comfort zone. My ability to deal with such adverse situations and find practical solutions is one of my proudest achievements from my PhD research.

I am planning to stay in academia, and hope to stay in Sheffield for the foreseeable future. I feel my research represents a new and unexplored area within dental public health, and an area that I am keen to continue to contribute towards. I am planning to apply for fellowships in order to continue my own research, and eventually hope to gain a lectureship so that I might be able to share my knowledge.

The scholarship has been vital in influencing my career plans. Without the scholarship I simply would not have had the time to complete my research to the level I have, and realised the potential of what I was doing. The scholarship allowed me to conduct additional research that added greater depth to my findings, as well as allowing me the time to gain a better understanding of the findings of the research. Additionally, the scholarship allowed me to stay in Sheffield, and take advantage of a number of teaching opportunities that arose.

Due to the opportunities afforded to me by the scholarship I feel I have a better chance of progressing within the field. I am extremely grateful for the opportunities the scholarship has afforded me.