Learning Best Practice from the Organisers of Ophthalmology Post-Graduate Regional Teaching Across the UK: a Qualitative Approach

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Introduction

Ophthalmology post-graduate teaching is organised on a regional (divided by Deanery) and local basis. Much of the learning undertaken by trainees throughout the course of their training is self directed, and based on clinical experience. Therefore, these planned learning events are unique opportunities for trainees be taught in a structed way, supported by senior clinicians, acting also as educators. Despite the importance and complimentary nature of this style of learning, there is no unified guidance or model for the organisation and delivery of post-graduate Ophthalmology teaching across the UK.

Therefore, this project aims to clarify exactly how different Deaneries organise and deliver Ophthalmology teaching, and what they have found works well. We hope that by canvasing the experiences of educators across the country and understanding what has been of value in different settings, we can identify themes of best practice to help improve the delivery of regional teaching.

Methods

This qualitative study was conducted between October 2023 and June 2024. In order to ensure appropriate consent and data handling, ethics approval was obtained through the University of Southampton (ERGO 89406). Data was collected from the Ophthalmology consultants/trainees who lead the organisation of Regional Teaching in each Deanery. They were contacted via email an offered the opportunity to participate. There were two elements to data collection: an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire focussed on how their regional teaching is organised and what they have found works well. Five semi-structured interviews were conducted conducted online on Microsoft Teams. Thery were recorded then transcribed by author FT.

Braun and Clarke's reflexive approach to thematic analysis[1] was used to analyse the white box answers from the questionnaires and the interview transcripts. The process of analysis started with familiarisation of the data. The data was then coded with the two research questions in mind FT. The findings were discussed with JC at regular meetings. Given the nature of the research questions, semantic coding, as opposed to latent coding was used. Themes were then developed and refined.

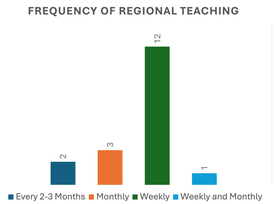
References
1 Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2021) Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide. Sage, London.

Results

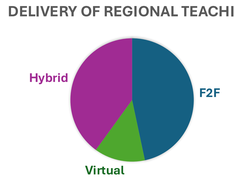
RQ1. How is Ophthalmology Regional Teaching delivered by different deaneries across the UK?

We received survey results from 18 out of the 26 'regions' that organise Regional Teaching across the UK, equating to a 69% survey response rate.

Frequency and Delivery of Regional Teaching



Of the 18 regions who responded, 12 had teaching on a weekly basis, 3 on a monthly basis, 2 on a 2-3 monthly basis and one deanery had both weekly and monthly teaching.



The monthly teaching sessions were all face to face, whereas the weekly teaching sessions were more often delivered in a hybrid (session available face to face but also virtually) format. Two deaneries delivered all teaching virtually.

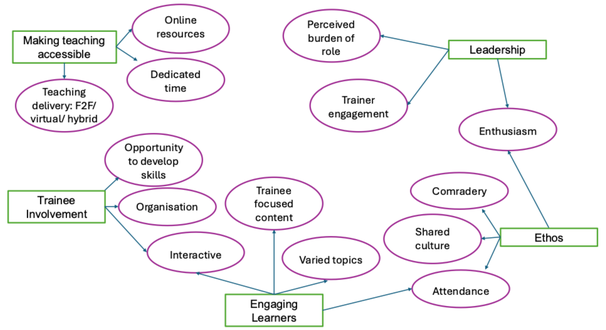
Discussion and Conclusion

Ophthalmology post-graduate teaching is organised and delivered across the UK in a variety of ways. A determining factor in this variety is the logistical circumstances within each deanery, with deanery size and technology support being important influencers. The decision about the regularity, modality and extent (deanery wide or split into sub-deanery groups) was different from deanery to deanery. Although face to face teaching was championed by some with the social aspects valued highly, the benefits of flexibility and accessibility with hybrid or virtual teaching cannot be ignored.

To conclude, different models are used to provide Ophthalmology post-graduate teaching across the UK, each with their own benefits and limitations. There is no perfect recipe for a successful teaching programme, however leadership, ethos, accessibility, trainee involvement and engaging learners were identified as important themes.

Qualitative Analysis

RQ2. What aspects have organisers of Regional Teaching found work well?



Theme 1 **Leadership**	The organisation and development of a teaching programme requires leadership and motivation. Many who took ownership of the overall teaching programme spoke enthusiastically about their role. This enthusiasm was an important aspect of co-ordinating a wider team, engaging local consultants to deliver the teaching. The role could be seen as burdensome, therefore delegation with guidance was a tactic employed by several leaders.
Theme 2 **Ethos**	The culture and values surrounding the teaching programme came through clearly during interview. Recurrent themes included the social benefit of face to face teaching. It is a time to compare notes, network and to develop a 'shared culture' with comradery at it's centre. *"It's an opportunity for everyone to get in the same room to discuss issues that are going on. People need to know that they're not alone."*
Theme 3 **Engaging Learners**	Using different teaching modalities and approaches to engage both trainees and consultants delivering teaching. This included ensuring a varied and engaging programme of topics with content relevant to trainees. Opportunities for exam preparation and simulation were frequently discussed. The aim was often to keep the delivery of teaching as interactive with quizzes, case based discussion and consultation clinics being used.
Theme 4 **Trainee Involvement**	Prioritising trainee involvement in the organisation and delivery of teaching. This was considered an opportunity for trainees to develop presentation and leadership skills and was focussed more on senior trainees. This also ties in with making teaching interactive and engaging learners.
Theme 5 **Accessibility**	This important theme explore what decisions have been made to enable teaching to be accessible to learners. For example, ensuring there is protected time and space for teaching and providing more flexible options (virtual access to teaching sessions and online resources). Some deaneries were very intentional about making teaching as accessible as possible and were inclusive of doctors beyond those in training.