

Foreword

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of the journal. Eagle eyed readers will have noticed that we have switched from describing the journal via season and year to using numbers for the journal. This is to assist librarians and others in tracking sequential volumes.

The IJCLE conference, Durham, England, 11-13th July 2012

A reminder of this conference in Durham. I look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones from around the World. For more information please visit www.ijcle.com.

In this edition

Ross Hyams and Faye Gertner's article recognises that the environment in which lawyers practice is changing rapidly and, in many jurisdictions, a multidisciplinary approach is becoming more important alongside a move away from the adversarial paradigm. They explore the benefits of students working in a truly multidisciplinary environment and some of the tensions – including the tension between the potential role of the lawyer as zealous advocate as against models that other professionals – such as social workers – follow. The authors also consider whether the student lawyer's ability to respect client autonomy can be undermined by working in an environment in which those such as social workers have a primary aim to protect the client's best interests (possibly undermining a client's freedom to choose unwisely).

Having explored how organisations might work together and some of the resourcing issues, the paper finishes by holding out the prospect of further research into the pedagogical benefits of establishing a fully fledged multidisciplinary clinic at Monash university through an initial pilot study.

Professor Tony Foley, Margie Rowe, Vivien Holmes and Stephen Tang describe their research into the challenge which new lawyers face in the transition from university to professional practice. The paper describes an important small pilot study undertaken by the authors into the experiences of eleven newly admitted lawyers in the Australian Capital Territory. The authors conclude from this early research that there are three factors that are important to developing professional identity. They go on to ask how clinical legal education programmes can assist students by beginning to address these factors prior to entering professional practice.

There is a surprising dearth of research in this area and this study provides an important wake up call to clinicians and the profession as to the need for far more investigation. For those of us who are clinicians, the more we know about the key issues for early practitioners, the more we can design clinic around assisting students to make the transition. This initial research adds to our understanding of how clinic can help prepare students to become successful reflective practitioners.

The clinical practice section of this edition of the journal focuses on Africa. There are two articles considering the (rapidly growing) Nigerian clinical experience. **S Mokidi and C Agbebaku** argue that there are significant deficiencies in the academic and vocational education for prospective lawyers

in Nigeria. They argue for the introduction of clinic at not just the final one year vocational study stage but also during the three year academic stage. They also recognise some of the barriers to such a project. Those barriers will not be unfamiliar to clinicians from a range of jurisdictions.

Kevwe Omoragbon's paper moves us from the general to the specific, as she considers the Women's Law Clinic at the University of Ibadan. The clinic is a collaboration between the law clinic and health care centres – particularly focused on improving healthcare by alleviating legal stressors. Inevitably these revolve around adequate maintenance, child custody issues and welfare. Clear benefits from the collaboration have arisen for students, medical professionals and of course clients.

It is interesting that in the Nigerian setting there is the move toward non-adversarial solutions to legal problems, adding further weight to Hyams and Gertner's point in their paper in this edition. It is clear that multidisciplinary partnership is a growing trend and there must be scope for those pioneering these developments to learn from the experience and research being conducted in countries as diverse as Nigeria, Australia and the US.

Professor Stephen Rosenbaum also looks at the African experience. This time in Togo. He gives an in-depth account of his visit to the country as part of general efforts to increase access to justice through providing free legal assistance. His detailed diary cum essay gives an insight into the role an outside consultant can play when asked to assist for a short period in a developing country such as Togo. Clearly there are limitations to the role but there is a clear impression that Professor Rosenbaum was able to play a part in establishing a dialogue about the creation of student law clinics and other forms of free legal service. His paper ends with seven tips for the short term consultant.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with many of you in Durham in July to continue sharing our experiences and insights from our practice as clinical educators.

Jonny Hall

Editor