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HIGHFIELD CAMPUS
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The home of the faculty of Medicine

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The home of the National Oceanography Centre Southampton (NOCS)

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What’s in a name? the importance of professional titles

Professor Alan M Borthwick OBE
Emeritus Professor,
University of Southampton
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“When I use a word”, Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I want it to mean – neither more nor less”

Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass, and what Alice found there (1871)
“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me”

HPRAC (2014)

Several jurisdictions in Canada and the US have identified the need to qualify the term “doctor” with the foot care specialty to avoid misleading the public ...

- In Manitoba, podiatrists may use the term “doctor” in connection with the term “podiatrist”, clearly indicating that he or she is not a physician

- Alberta protects the titles “podiatric surgeon”, “doctor of podiatric medicine”, and “podiatric physician” for podiatrists

- Connecticut and Rhode Island prohibit the use of the term “doctor” or its synonym without the designation of “podiatrist”, “podiatric medicine”, or “chiropodist” as to not mislead the public ...

- For a similar reason, Wisconsin protects the titles “doctor of podiatry”, “doctor of podiatric medicine”, “doctor of surgical chiropody”, and “foot doctor”
Chiropody Act (1991) established 2 “classes” of foot care professions:

**“Podiatrists”** (DPM from USA, registered in Ontario before July 31st 1993)

**“Chiropodists”** (Ontario DCh, UK, Australian, South African and any USA DPM registered after 31st July 1993 – the ‘podiatry cap’)

Chiropody and Podiatry in Ontario
Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council review of regulation 2014

- Propose one class of practitioner only: *podiatrists*
- Review of scope of practice
- Review of educational requirements:
workforce redesign and the policy agenda

- “new ways of working”, “breaking down traditional barriers” & “working across traditional professional boundaries” (Allsop 2006; DoH 2000a, 2000b, 2001)
workforce redesign and the policy agenda

- “doctors will need to be prepared to let go of some of the work that others can safely do” (Roxon 2008)
“In countries using Common Law, the law has to state that an act is forbidden... In countries that use Roman Law, the law must explicitly permit an action”

(Editorial, Podiatry Now, 2000, 3(4):90)
Regulated Health Professions Act 1991 (Ontario)

- “Controlled acts”: those that “if not performed by a qualified practitioner, may pose a risk of harm to the public”
How do the professions respond to role boundary change?

- **Professional resistance** (Adams 2015; Huby et al 2014; Hunter and Segrott 2014; Pickard 2010; Timmons and East 2011; Zetka 2011)
  - ‘core’ tasks defended (‘virtuoso’ roles)
  - ‘peripheral’ tasks shared
  - marginal tasks shed (‘dirty work’)

(King et al 2015; Nancarrow 2015; Nancarrow and Borthwick 2016, Hugman 1991; Zetka 2011)
Insights from the sociology of the professions

  - Autonomy (self-regulation)
  - Authority (control over work of other health occupations)
  - Sovereignty (wider cultural authority in society at large)
‘neo-Weberian’ approach

‘Professions’ act to

- advance social status
- corner the market for services (by exclusion),
- acquire new spheres of control (usurpation & encroachment),
- establish or negotiate control over work, & define the needs of the consumer (Berlant 1975; Freidson 1970, 1994, 2001; Johnson 1972; Larkin 1983; Parkin 1979)
‘neo-Weberian’ approach

Social closure

- Legal recognised monopoly constitutes the ‘ultimate legitimising of a task domain’ (Larkin 1983)
- ‘Safe haven’ from market by state sanctioned monopoly (Berlant 1975)
Medical Dominance: 3 modes of domination
  - Subordination
  - Limitation
  - Exclusion

(Turner 1987: 138)
Occupational imperialism

‘attempts by a number of occupations to mould the division of labour to their own advantage... it involves tactics of ‘poaching’ skills from others or delegating them to secure income, status and control...’

(Larkin 1983)
Jurisdictional disputes (Abbott 1988)

- ‘fundamental fact of professional life is inter-professional competition’
- It is the content of work, control of work & differentiation of work that give rise to conflict and claims over ‘jurisdiction’
Pierre Bourdieu and “symbolic capital”

“Capital” confers power:

- Economic capital
- Cultural Capital
- Social Capital
- Symbolic Capital:
  - “commonly called prestige, reputation, renown etc, which is the form in which the different forms of capital are perceived and recognised as legitimate” (Bourdieu 1985)
“Capital” confers power:

- **Symbolic Capital:**
  
  the extent to which one has “the power to institute, to name, to define who is who, to make distinctions... it is that which brings prestige, reputation or renown” (Bourdieu 1985)
Symbolic violence is “the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e., culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate. This legitimacy obscures the power relations which permit that imposition to be successful”

(Bourdieu and Passeron 1977)
Symbolic devaluation ("strategies of condescension")

"...The existing holders, for their part, objectively devalue the newcomers... by introducing differences among the title holders linked to seniority in accession to the title"

(Bourdieu 1986)
Symbolic Capital:

“It is the symbolic scarcity of the title in the [social] space of the names of the professions that tends to govern the rewards of the occupation (and not the relationship between the supply and demand for a particular form of labour)” (Bourdieu 1985)

RCS challenged of use title ‘consultant’ claiming title protected by statutory instrument (1996)
RACS (2006) asserted:
- Accreditation should be through the AMC
- Podiatric surgery limited to ‘minor procedures’
- Title should be “Podiatric Proceduralists”
Podiatric surgery: changing landscape

from
  o exclusive right to undertake invasive surgery a ‘taken for granted’ assumption

to
  o impose oversight of surgery by non-medically qualified podiatrists

to
  o restrict use of professional titles to retain symbolic power
Orthopaedic surgeons and foot surgery

“the least popular of the orthopaedic sub-specialities... with which medical students and doctors have the most difficulty”

(Kelly et al 2011)
method

- Analysis of British media reports 2002-2014
- Press and TV coverage
- Data examined for
  - Medical discourse on ‘podiatric surgeon’
  - Media discourse (did it promote the medical perspective?)
- Data accessed via Gorkana Group Media Portal (monitors 65,000 pages of daily content, covering 12,000 outlets from 5,500 UK print titles, 6000 websites, 98 broadcast channels and social media sources)
Orthopaedic surgeons, foot surgery and titles: a new departure?

- “the title of podiatric surgeon is not protected in law” (Hansard 2011)

- British Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society “recognised the training and skills of podiatrists and operative podiatrists... [but] operative podiatrists should be titled ‘podiatric surgical practitioners’ to avoid any confusion with medically qualified orthopaedic surgeons” (Laing et al 2007)
- Symbolic devaluation

  - "A consultant podiatric surgeon is just a chiropodist who has decided to charge a bit more" (Goldacre 2004)

  - Podiatrists “posing” as surgeons, who were “trying to pull the wool over the publics’ eyes” (Macnicol 2002)
symbolic devaluation

“I have every respect for podiatrists’ surgical skills. I recognise the commercial imperatives which might lead some to mislead patients. But the title ‘surgical podiatrist’ is perfectly adequate to describe their status, to which ‘chief’, ‘grand high’, ‘most senior’ or any other descriptor can be added if they like...”

(Rawlins 2011)
symbolic violence: ‘consultant podiatric surgeon’

“the public automatically assumes that anybody with this title is not only a doctor, but an extremely well-qualified one... without exception they are astonished when they find these people have no medical qualifications”

(Hawkes 2004)
symbolic devaluation

“pseudoscientists pretending to have all kinds of qualifications and quoting authorities all over the shop... innocent phonetic coincidence between ‘consultant orthopaedic surgeon’ and ‘consultant podiatric surgeon’”

(Goldacre 2004)
symbolic value of titles

“'consultant surgeon’ is a desirable title. ..it is now being overused and often inappropriately used by some non-medically qualified healthcare workers in the NHS, to the potential detriment of patients”

(Getty 2010)
symbolic value of titles

BOFAS “recognised the training and skills of podiatrists and operative podiatrists... [but] operative podiatrists should be titled ‘podiatric surgical practitioner’ to avoid any confusion with medically qualified orthopaedic surgeons”

(Laing et al 2007)
“Titles as symbolic capital” (Bourdieu 1985)

“it is not the relative value of the work that determines the value of the name, but the institutionalised value of the title that can be used as a means of defending or maintaining the value of the work”

(Bourdieu 1985)
Thank you for your attention

ab12@soton.ac.uk