Parting Ways with the “Universal Model”

Diversifying & Decolonising Our Anatomy Curriculum

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Introductions
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What is Decolonisation?
What is Decolonisation?

“The de-centering of Eurocentric systems and knowledge production. - the reappraisal of whitewashed history.”

“Confronting and challenging the colonizing practices that have influenced education in the past but which persist in educational practice today.”
Progress In Aberdeen

- **Systems Teaching**: Implementation of student-made resources tackling clinical presentations across POC demographics
- **Clinical Skills**: Use of diverse models for practical skills
- **Anatomy?**: Is there scope? To what benefit?
Why try to decolonise anatomy?
A starting point:

• An external examiner has suggested to increase representation of race in exams.
• There is beneficial application of Surface Anatomy materials.
Only 11% of images (out with reproductive anatomy) depicted women.

Giacomini et al. (1986)

- 78% of bodies assessed were caucasian
  - Men were 2.2x more likely to be presented than women.
  - Transgendered bodies recorded only 5 times.
  - Only 2.7% of images represented disability

Parker et al. (2017)

x8

x17
Coincidentally representing the problem at hand?
Progress In Aberdeen

**Systems Teaching**
Implementation of student-made resources tackling clinical presentations across POC demographics

**Clinical Skills**
Use of diverse models for practical skills

**Anatomy?**
Is there scope? Is there benefit? Yes.
A more inclusive anatomy curriculum
The Audit
To analyse the representation of skin tones, gender and body types within our anatomy curriculum.

Aims:

- Literature Review
- Analysed characteristics of surface anatomy in core teaching materials for the anatomy curriculum
Skin Tone Assessment

- Used the **Fitzpatrick scale** to classify skin tones
- Worked through teaching materials (workbooks, lectures) to look at skin tones of images displayed.
Assessment of Body Type & Sex

**Body Type**
Described as a range from
*Slim - Large*

**Sex**
Described as either
*male-presenting*
*or*
*female-presenting*
The Audit Results
Skin Tone Representation

Fitzpatrick Type I had the maximum representation, with no representation of Fitzpatrick Type VI.
Representation of Sex

67% of images were male presenting
Representation of Sex

The majority of images were male-presenting.

- Male-presenting: 74%
- Female-presenting: 26%
Body Type

Most images are of slim or toned, muscular individuals.
“White males have long dominated as the archetypal representation in Western Anatomy textbooks, typically presented as the ‘universal model’ of the human form.”

—Finn et al., 2022 | Colonization, cadavers, and color: Considering decolonization of anatomy curricula
Conclusions & Moving Forward
Thoughts on Results

Our findings support what we have found during our literature search.

The toned, slim, white male is most commonly used to represent the human form in our Anatomy Curriculum.

Highlight the need to explore avenues of revamping materials to be more robust & diverse.
Now
What?
Surface Anatomy Image Bank
The Next Steps

Build the Surface Anatomy Image Bank

Planning logistics on how the image bank will be made

Surface Anatomy Image Bank to be made available to healthcare students & implemented across materials
In Summary

- Current literature shows slim white males are over-represented across Anatomy Teaching Materials.

- Our audit of the compulsory teaching materials at Aberdeen Medical School supports this.

- With the present need of a more inclusive and diverse anatomy curriculum, our next steps will be building and launching a *Surface Anatomy Image Bank* at Aberdeen Medical School.
Special Thanks To

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Questions?