CHEATING IN ASSESSMENTS:
Doing, detecting and deterring

Trudie E Roberts
A STORY........
CONTENT

- What is cheating?
- Prevalence?
- Who cheats?
- Is cheating important?
- What motivates students to cheat?
- Bad apples or bad barrels?
- What’s to be done?
- Reframing cheating differently
DEFINITION OF CHEATING

- Breaking the rules to get ahead

Harper 2006
PREVALENCE

- Difficult to measure
- Research studies
  - Self reports from students and Faculty
  - Participants from more than one institution
  - Different sample sizes and response rates
  - Different types of cheating behaviour
PREVALENCE

- Bowers 1963 - 5000 students from 99 campuses - 63% reported cheating
- McCabe and Trevino 1996 - 70% students reported cheating
- McCabe 2005 - 80,000 students from 83 campuses 25-50% admit some form of cheating
- Centre for Academic Integrity - 70% college students admit some form of cheating
GENERAL FINDINGS

- Smith et al 1972 93% US college students felt cheating was a way of life

![Graph showing decline in morals over time]
WHO CHEATS?

“It’s not the dumb kids who cheat.....its the kids with the 4.6 grade point average who are under so much pressure to keep their grades up and get into the best colleges. They’re the ones who are smart enough to figure out how to cheat without getting caught”
Who cheats?

- Gender changes
  - 1963 - 1993
- Educational level
  - 69% - 45%
- Humanities vs science
- Discipline with the highest rate of cheating?
- Cultural effects
PREVALENCE IN HEALTHCARE STUDENTS

Nursing

- McCabe 2008 – 58% undergraduate and 47% graduate nurses reported cheating
- Arhin and Jones 2009 – 30% nurses though making up laboratory result was not dishonest
Prevalence in healthcare students

- **Pharmacy**
  - Rabi et al 2006 – 16% admit cheating in the course
  - Henning et al 2013 – 34% admitted cheating
    - 91% admitted some form of copying
CHEATING IN MEDICAL SCHOOLS

- Sierles et al 1980 – 58% medical students report cheating at least once
- Baldwin et al 1996 – 5% cheating in medical school (80% before entry)
- Rennie and Crosbie 2001 - Dundee study 2% admitted to copying, 58% admitted to plagiarism
- Dyrbye et al 2010 – 1.5% students admit cheating in exams but 43% falsify clinical findings
Why is cheating important?

- Concerns
  - cheating on exams and failing to report error
  - ‘no-one wants a cheating nurse to look after them’
  - Cheaters in Medical School more likely to fabricate clinical data
  - Are cheating students competent?
  - Past behaviour predicts future actions
BAD APPLES OR BAD BARRELS?
STUDENTS OR THE SITUATION?
Motivation - Why do students cheat?

- Type of assessment
- Pressure to perform
- Burn out
- Likelihood of detection
- Perception of wrong doing
The pressure to perform

- The pressure to get into medical school courses
- Ranking in UK medical schools now a way of life
- National ranking for postgraduate F1 posts
- Pressure for residency places
What’s to be done

- Prevention
- Increased detection
- Punishment
- Student support
- Education
  - Honour codes
  - Learning contracts
  - Ethics and moral philosophy teaching
Medical student cheating - UK
Has a student behaved dishonestly or fraudulently?
The medical school should take action if a student’s behaviour is such that trust in the medical profession might be undermined. This might include plagiarism, cheating, dishonesty in reports and logbooks, forging the signature of a supervisor.
CULTURE

The way we do things here
Attitude to performing behaviour
Subjective norm to performing behaviour
Belief about ability to perform behaviour

Behaviour intent

Behaviour

Theory of Planned Behaviour
Ajzen 1991
Reframing cheating – The Theory of Planned Behaviour in the professions

Harding et al 2006
Is cheating a worse crime for medical students?

Yes

Trust
THE STORY CONTINUES.....
Theory of Planned Behaviour

- Attitude to performing behaviour
- Subjective norm to performing behaviour
- Belief about ability to perform behaviour

Behaviour intent

Behaviour
IN SUMMARY......

Cheating is wrong. Cheating is wrong.
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THANK YOU