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 those 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 multidisplinary 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