



# Differential Attainment in Medical Students

Dr Sarju Patel and Dr Bethan Stephens

On behalf of the differential attainment working group

# **Session Overview**

---

What is Differential Attainment (DA)?

---

What is Cardiff University doing to tackle DA?

---

What contributes to DA?

---

How does placement experience impact DA?



# Differential Attainment

- Differential Attainment refers to disparities in outcomes and performance among different demographic groups
- Differentials that exist because of ability are expected and appropriate
- Differentials connected solely to age, gender or ethnicity of a particular group are not acceptable
- Can be manifested in different areas – Exam pass rates, recruitment outcomes and progression through training
- Systemic in undergraduate and postgraduate medical education

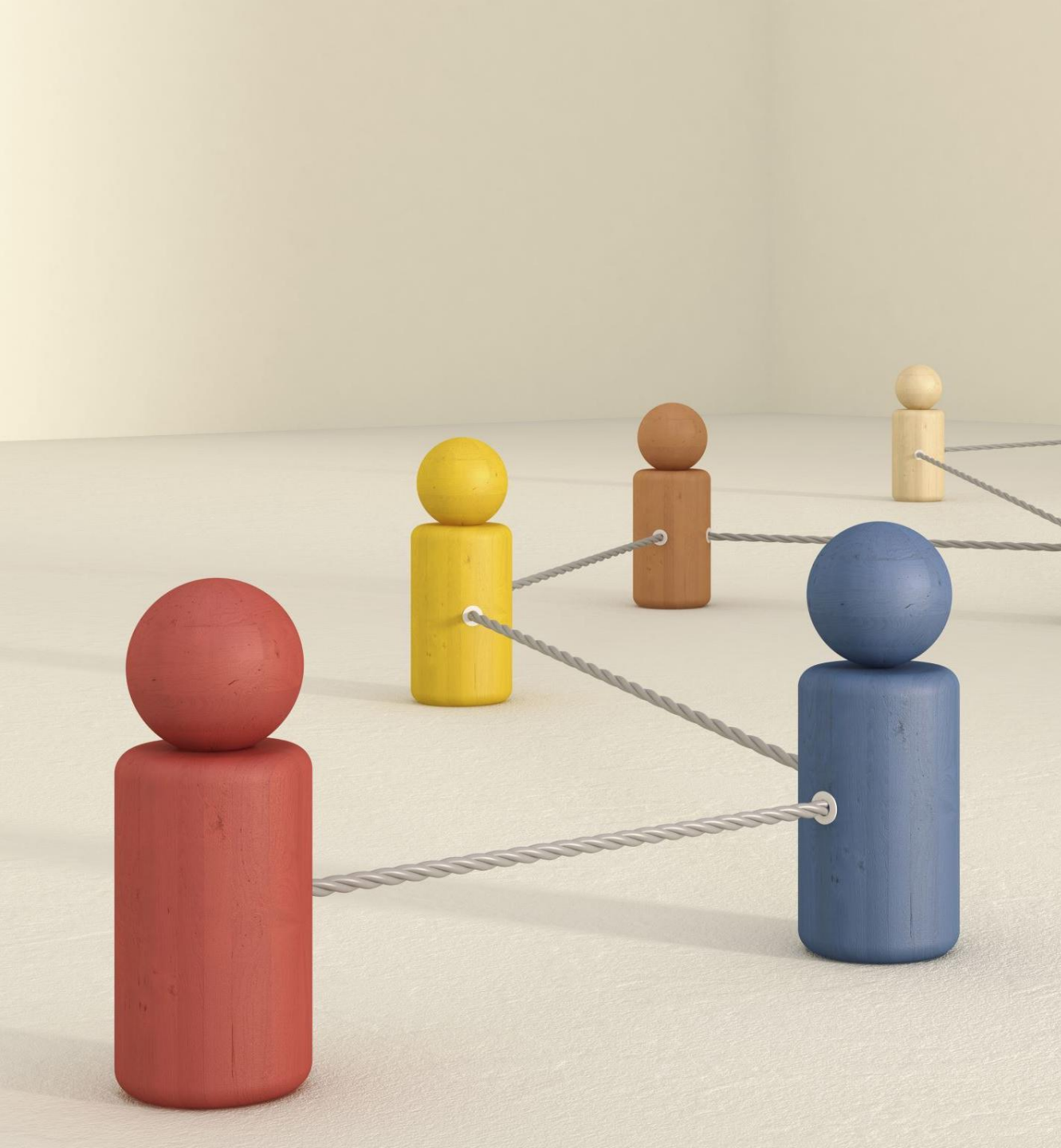
# Isn't it Just a Biased Exam?

Misconception that Differential attainment arises from examiners marking certain groups of students down

Research points towards need to improve learning environment for students

Interactions between fellow students and teachers affect outcomes

Minority medical students 'experienced less supportive social and less positive environments



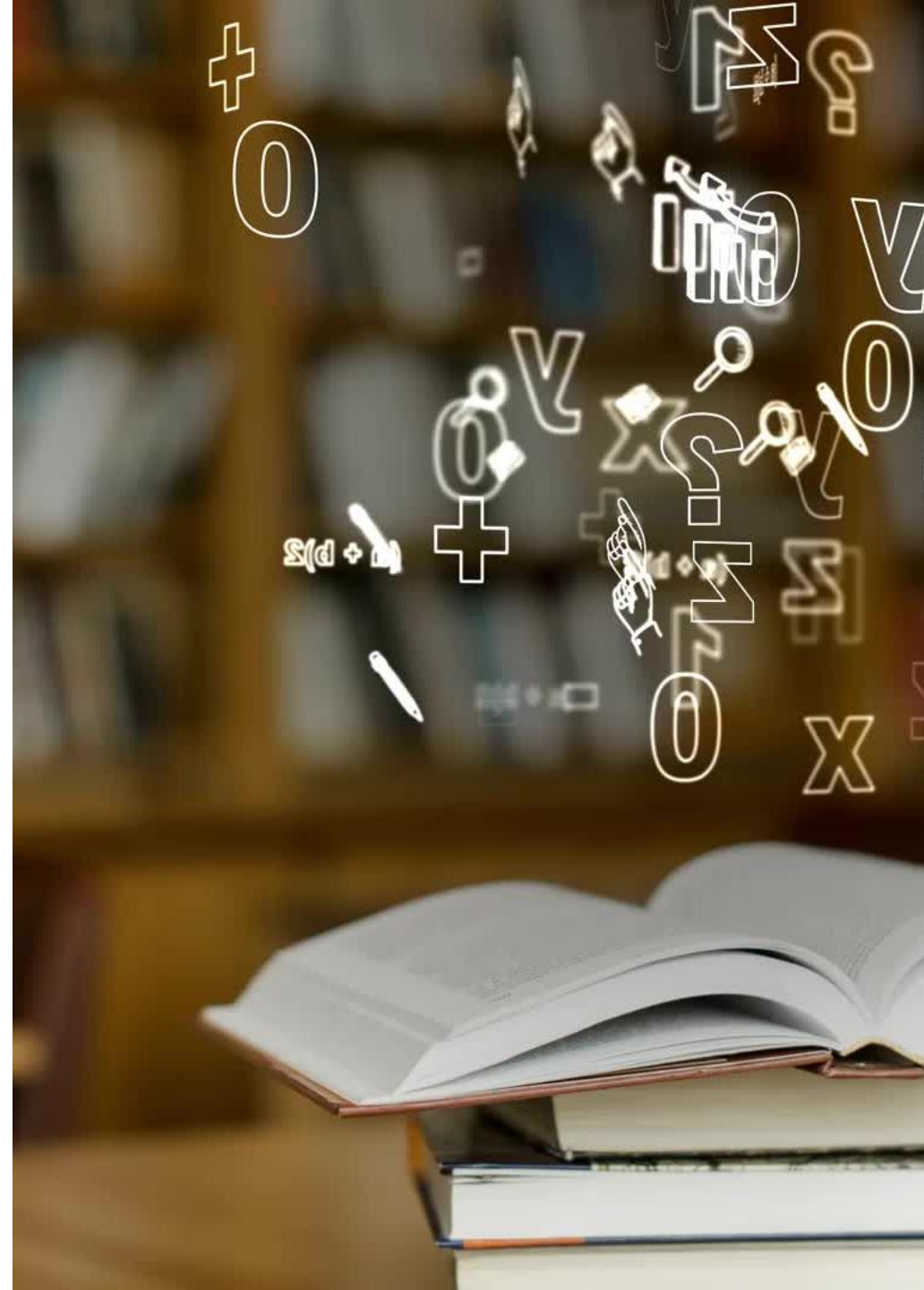
# Potential Barriers to Attainment

- Difficulties into relationships with fellow students, educators, patients and trainers
- Different learning styles
- Language barriers and cultural references
- Unconscious bias
- Distance from support network
- Additional pressures



# Centre for Medic Education

- Improving the learning environment
- Reducing the financial burden of learning
- University level actions
- Action in Examinations



# **Centre for Medic Education**

Differential Attainment group

Two workstreams

- Placement experience/ learning environment
- Tracking student performance from admissions through to graduation to identify groups who may be affected by differential attainment



# What can we do as educational supervisors?

- Individualised support
- Embrace diversity
- Early identification
- Faculty development



# **What are the challenges that Educational supervisors face?**

Saying nothing for fear of saying the wrong thing

Time

- Clinician time
- Time student attach to the team

Patients

**Do you have any positive  
experiences you can share**



# Thank you for listening

Dr Bethan Stephens  
[StephensBL@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:StephensBL@cardiff.ac.uk)

Dr Sarju Patel  
[patels2@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:patels2@cardiff.ac.uk)