

Promoting Oral Health Education Through Student Manager Training and Dental Referral

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Introduction

- Oral health is an important part of one's well being.
- There is a large burden of oral health problems among the homeless population due lack of access.
- There is a need for referral services for dental services.
- Student run clinics in homeless shelters provide an opportunity to address this problem.
- There is limited research on how to train student managers to address oral health at homeless shelters and a referral system to connect homeless individuals to dental services .

Purpose

- To increase familiarity with the general oral health exam among PA and medical students through a dental curriculum
- To asses the dental needs among the patient population with surveys.
- Increase proportion of referrals to dental services.

Methods

1. Student managers were trained with a 45 minute presentation on 5/8/17 and 10/9/17 that focused on recognizing regular dental problems including:
 - Dental carries
 - Tooth abscess
 - Serious dental concerns such as oral cancer.There was also a simulation of a general oral exam. Pre and post tests were sent out by email and collected by google form and converted to Excel. The surveys were adapted from the nccPA dental CME quiz and the Smiles for Life Curriculum.
2. We assessed the need for dental care among this patient population using screening surveys that were handed out by undergraduate clinic managers to new patients and those with dental complaints. Managers scored the survey and notified PA and medical student managers of patient that needed an oral exam and dental referral.
3. We tracked patient referrals to dental clinic with referral forms sign out sheet. [Contact: buicamtu4@gmail.com](mailto:buicamtu4@gmail.com)

Results

Table 1: Clinic Manager Pre- and Post-test Knowledge Results

Questions	Pre-test Correct answers (n=18)	Post test Correct answers (n=16)	P values
What is the most common disease of childhood	9	14	0.0253
A 28 year old patient presents with the following pattern on his tongue. He complains of occasional burning and soreness along the indentions. What is the appropriate treatment?	2	7	0.1025
During an oral examination, you encounter the following bilateral, bony growths on the patient's mandibular surface. The growths have not been painful, but have been fluctuating in size over the past few years. What is the appropriate treatment recommendation?	5	14	0.0027
You are performing an oral exam on a 43 year old woman when you notice the following pattern on her tongue. There are similar plaques on her buccal mucosa. If untreated, what will these plaques progress to?	7	13	0.0082
What is the cause of dental erosions?	9	15	0.0082

Table 2: Patient Needs Assessment

Questions	Yes N=13
Do you brush your teeth less than 2 times a day	9 (69%)
Do you floss less than 1 time per day	11 (85%)
Do you smoke cigarettes	8 (62%)
Have you ever had a cavity	10 (77%)
Do you have tooth pain	4 (31%)
Do you experience pain along the gums of your teeth	3 (23%)
Do you notice bleeding when you brush or floss your teeth	5 (38%)
Do you have any loose or missing teeth	8 (62%)

Patient referrals

- 89% of patients warranted an oral exam from their patient surveys.
- 65% of patients were referred to the dental clinic.
- 9% of patients went to the dental clinic.

Conclusions/Next Steps

- Through this effort, we were able to increase manager understand and awareness of oral health.
- We saw that many patients were unable to find a method of transportation to the dental clinic.
- We were able to secure a grant that provided the clinic with bus passes to help get patients to their appointments.
- We will continue to work with the upcoming clinic managers to streamline the referral process and ensure that patients are able to make their appointment.
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