



Primary Care Practitioners and Oral Health

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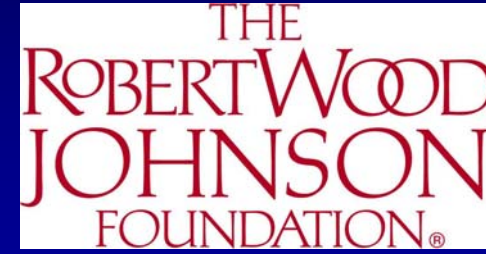
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 - ◆ Physician Oral Health Education in Kentucky
 - ◆ University of Connecticut
 - ◆ University of Massachusetts

Funders for Smiles for Life



Evidence is Clear for Oral Health Prevention



- **General Population** (USPSTF 1989, 1996):
 - ◆ Fluoridated toothpaste (I, A)
 - ◆ Visit dentist regularly and hygiene measures

- **High Risk Populations** (MMWR 2001):
 - ◆ Topical fluoride gels (I, A)
 - ◆ Fluoride varnishes on permanent teeth (I, A)
 - ◆ Sealants (I, A)
 - ◆ Dietary counseling (II-2, C)
 - ◆ Fluoride supplements if water <.3ppm (I, A)



Primary Care Practitioners

- >90% of physicians think oral health should be addressed at well visits, yet...
 - ◆ Surveys of physicians
 - > 50% had little or no oral health training
 - Only 9% could answer 4 simple questions correctly
 - Averaged <2 hours of oral health training
- Like it or not, the “medical home” is the “dental home” until a patient finds a true dental home

And obstetricians...

2005 survey of 249 obstetricians in Ohio:

- 29% perform an oral exam during prenatal care
- 20% use oral health screening questions
- 6% referred patients to a dentist
- However, 64% agree oral health screening should be part of prenatal care
- 66% thought oral health needs should be addressed throughout all trimesters



And dentists...

2005 survey of 829 general dentists practicing in Oregon:

- 71% said insurance plans do not adequately compensate for time spent counseling pregnant women
- 42% are concerned about being sued if something goes wrong with a patient's pregnancy
- 23% reported that they do not have the counseling skills needed to work with pregnant women

The Disconnect

- Most patients have a medical home; many fewer have a dental home
- Children are 2.5 times more likely to lack dental coverage than medical coverage
- Dentists per capita declining
- Few pediatric dentists in many areas
- Physicians have a lack of oral health knowledge
- Physicians are seldom reimbursed for oral health care



Oral and Systemic Health Linkages

Oral Health Affects Systemic Health



- Untreated caries can lead to local and systemic complications
 - ◆ Facial cellulitis
 - ◆ Malocclusion from lost teeth
 - ◆ Poor self-esteem



Oral Health Affects Systemic Health



- Maternal periodontal disease increases risk of preterm labor
- Periodontal disease associated with heart disease and worsened control of diabetes



Systemic Health Affects Oral Health



- Alcohol and tobacco increase risk of oral cancers



Systemic Health Affects Oral Health



- Oral manifestations of systemic disease
 - ◆ Diabetes increases risk for periodontal disease
 - ◆ Pregnancy exacerbates gingivitis
 - ◆ Sjogren's Syndrome leads to xerostomia which leads to caries



Systemic Health Affects



Oral Health

- Oral effects of medications
 - ◆ Candidiasis from inhaled steroids
 - ◆ Xerostomia from anticholinergics
 - ◆ Gingival hyperplasia from phenytoin
 - ◆ Ulcerative stomatitis from methotrexate
 - ◆ Mucositis from chemotherapy or radiation treatment





The Role of the Primary Care Practitioner (PCP)

Across the Life Cycle

- Preconception -> FPs, OBs, Peds/AM
- Prenatally -> FPs, OBs, MWs
- Infant, Childhood -> FPs, Peds
- Adolescence -> FPs, Peds/AM
- Adult -> FPs, IM, OBs
- Geriatric -> FPs, IM,
Geriatrician
- Urgent Care -> FP, IM, Peds, OBs,
EM

A,S,K

- **A**ttitude – Put oral health on every PCPs radar screen
- **S**kills – have the ability to screen and refer
- **K**nowledge – have the tools to give advice to parents and children from birth on hygiene, nutrition, fluoride

Role of the PCP



- Screen for disease and risk
 - ◆ History, Risk Assessment & Examination
- Provide anticipatory guidance
 - ◆ Caries Prevention
 - Oral hygiene advice
 - Dietary guidance
 - Promote, prescribe, (and apply) fluoride
 - ◆ Oral Health Maintenance
 - ◆ Early Referrals
- Monitor oral-systemic health interactions
- Initial management of oral emergencies



Role of the PCP

- Collaboration with dentists
 - ◆ Develop relationships
 - ◆ Referrals for routine and emergency care
 - ◆ Collaborative care plans
 - Medically complicated patients
 - Anticoagulation
 - Antibiotic prophylaxis
- Patient and community advocacy
 - ◆ Access to care
 - ◆ Community fluoridation
 - ◆ Safety and injury prevention



Take Home Messages

- Oral and systemic health are interrelated
- There are gaps of knowledge, interest and reimbursement for oral health by PCPs
- PCPs can have a major impact on the oral health of individuals and communities

Solutions - level by level



- Office and hospital
- State, County Medical Academies
- National Medical Board exams
- Insurance - reimbursement
- State legislators
- State physician champions

Questions? Discussion

