

**Title of Intervention:** A Spit Tobacco Use Intervention for Baseball Players

**Intervention Strategies:** Individual Education, Supportive Relationships

**Purpose of the Intervention:** To motivate athletes to quit or decrease smokeless tobacco usage

**Population:** Major and minor league baseball players who use smokeless tobacco

**Setting:** Baseball teams in San Francisco; worksite-based

**Partners:** The National Spit Tobacco Education Program, Oral Health America, the University of California at San Francisco, Baseball Hall of Fame broadcaster Joe Garagiola, former major leaguer player and victim of oral cancer, and his wife

**Intervention Description:**

- Individual Education: All players were screened for oral health cancer and were informed of any lesions. For the tobacco users, the dentist pointed out anything in their mouths related to spit tobacco usage. The athletes received self-help manuals.
- Supportive Relationships: The oral health care provider counseled on spit tobacco cessation and its process. Participants were shown pictures of other athletes with oral lesions and given mirrors to watch for signs of the disease. The athletic trainers provided additional counseling and monitoring of any cessation attempts. An expert counselor was present during the examination to provide brief counseling and support if needed. The athletes also received a toll-free helpline to consult with an expert spit tobacco counselor.

**Theory:** Not mentioned

**Resources Required:**

- Staff/Volunteers: Oral health care providers, certified athletic trainer, expert counselors
- Training: Behavior methods and nicotine replacement therapy training for athletic trainers, dentists and dental hygienists
- Technology: Not mentioned
- Space: Space for screenings and counseling sessions
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Self-help manuals ("Beat the Smokeless Habit-Game Plan for Success" and "Enuff Snuff"), disposable dental mirrors, oral non-tobacco substitutes
- Evaluation: Printed questionnaires

**Evaluation:**

- Design: Pilot study
- Methods and Measures:
  - Questionnaire to measure participants' spit tobacco usage and patterns

**Outcomes:**

- Short Term Impact: Not measured
- Long Term Impact: The use of smokeless tobacco decreased. Some players quit completely.

**Maintenance:** Not mentioned

**Lessons Learned:** There is a unique environmental component that supports spit tobacco use as the social norm for baseball players. This poses a special challenge for cessation. Feedback from the oral exam, nicotine replacement therapy and support from team players and family seemed to be particularly useful. The use of alternative behaviors to avoid high-risk situations was useful for quitting. There is a need for nicotine replacement therapy products in the clubhouse and information on the use of other treatments.

**Citation(s):**

Walsh, M. M., J. C. Greene, et al. (1998). "A dental-based, athletic trainer-mediated spit tobacco cessation program for professional baseball players." *J Calif Dent Assoc* 26(5): 365-72, 376.