

Title of Intervention: Self-Assessments of Oral Health Status

Intervention Strategies: Group Education, Individual Education, Supportive Relationships

Purpose of the Intervention: To motivate adults to improve their oral health status

Population: 9th and 10th grade students, 14 and 15 years of age

Setting: High schools in York County, Virginia; school-based

Partners: National Institute of Dental Research

Intervention Description:

- Group Education: Each group received a standardized oral health education session conducted by dental hygienists.
- Individual Education: Each child was issued a manual that described home care procedures and was instructed to follow it. Group 1 participants were instructed to identify areas which bled on brushing or with use of the inter-dental sticks, to record these findings in their manual and to intensify oral hygiene efforts on these areas. Group 2 participants were instructed to use disclosing tablets for the first 5 days to identify areas with plaque, record findings in their manual, and to focus on removal of the plaque. After the 5 days, Group 2 participants assessed their teeth for plaque, without the use of disclosing tablets. Both groups received identical instructions on brushing with fluoride toothpaste and use of the inter-dental sticks.
- Supportive Relationships: Participants returned their completed manuals to school at the end of the self-assessment period. Each student discussed with a dental hygienist the differences between their observations and the results of the clinical assessments. Each student demonstrated use of the tooth stick.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Dental hygienist
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Not mentioned
- Space: Classroom and counseling space
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Home care manual, inter-dental sticks, disclosing tablets
- Evaluation: Dental screening supplies

Evaluation:

- Design: Randomized time series
- Methods and Measures:
 - Oral examination to assess plaque, calculus, probing depths and gingival bleeding on probing
 - Oral examination to assess gingival recession on all available permanent teeth except 3rd molars

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Not measured
- Long Term Impact: There was a decrease in the average number of bleeding sites in both groups. There was a decrease in the number of participants who had probing depths of four millimeters or greater.

Maintenance: Immediately after the 12-month exam, all study subjects were eligible for an oral preventative treatment, including at school.

Lessons Learned: Stressing the importance of attaining a "clean mouth" may have influenced participation more than traditional messages that focus on disease prevention. In other words, brushing behavior is more closely associated with feeling clean than preventing disease.

Citation(s):

Nowjack-Raymer, R., J. Ainamo, et al. (1995). "Improved periodontal status through self-assessment. A 2-year longitudinal study in teenagers." *J Clin Periodontol* 22(8): 603-8.