

Title of Intervention: Healthy Teeth from the Beginning because the Beginning Counts!

Intervention Strategies: Provider Education, Supportive Relationships, Environments and Policies, Campaigns and Promotions

Purpose of the Intervention: To modify bottle-feeding and tooth cleaning practices

Population: Infants in Jerusalem aged 6-12 months and their mothers

Setting: Maternal and child health (MCH) centers in Jerusalem; community based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- **Provider Education:** MCH nurses were instructed to include oral health within their regular health education. They were provided with basic in-service training regarding methods of cleaning infants' teeth and the amount of toothpaste to be placed on the toothbrush. Dental models and toothbrushes were used to demonstrate cleaning of all tooth surfaces. No specific tooth brushing method was advocated. A video was shown that provided suggestions for pacifying methods other than the use of bottles. Nurses were encouraged to look at teeth and look for any early signs of caries. Pictures and slides demonstrating early childhood caries (ECC) were shown.
- **Supportive Relationships:** Nurses educated mothers during visits to the MCH centers. Nurses instructed mothers on reducing sugar added to the bottle and other foods, refraining use of bottles as pacifiers, refraining from sleeping with bottles unless it contains only water, daily teeth cleanings with fluoridated toothpaste, beginning at the age of tooth eruption, drinking from a cup instead of bottle during the child's second year, and dental examination by dentist or hygienist. Nurses also had the option of demonstrating proper brushing on models and were given photographs of early childhood caries (ECC) to show to parents.
- **Environments and Policies:** Toothpastes and toothbrushes were distributed every two months.
- **Campaigns and Promotions:** A large poster was designed, framed and hung in all program clinics. The slogan read, 'Healthy teeth from the beginning - because the beginning counts!' The poster included messages of decreasing frequency of sweet drinks, beginning to drink from a cup as early as possible and starting to clean teeth soon after they erupt. A short leaflet that listed information on how to keep baby's teeth healthy was published for parents.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Nurses
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Videos
- Space: Not mentioned
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Education materials, posters, videos, pamphlets, tooth models, toothbrushes, toothpaste
- Evaluation: Checklist, interview protocol, questionnaires

Evaluation:

- Design: Cohort, pre- and post-evaluation
- Methods and Measures:
 - Questionnaire/interview to assess bottle use habits and toothbrush and toothpaste use

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Not measured
- Long Term Impact: Program participants who received a combination of health education and free toothbrushes and toothpaste led to a significant improvement in reported tooth brushing of infants.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: The significant difference between a health education program with distribution of toothbrushes and toothpastes and a health education program alone shows that addition of toothbrush and toothpaste distribution could enhance early initiation of oral hygiene behavior.

Citation(s):

Sgan-Cohen, H. D., I. K. Mansbach, et al. (2001). "Community-oriented oral health promotion for infants in Jerusalem: evaluation of a program trial." *J Public Health Dent* 61(2): 107-13.