

Staff, Parents, and Pregnant Women differ in opinion regarding Oral Health of Early Head Start Children

The United States Health Resources and Services Administration conducted a group among Early Head Start staff, parents, and pregnant women attitudes toward oral health. Nine focus groups were conducted with audiotapes of the sessions transcribed into ATLAS.ti 5.0 for coding and analysis.

Differences in opinions varied among the participants. When it came to the importance of oral health, staff members reported that EHS parents do not place oral health as a high priority. However, many parents understood the importance of caring for their children's teeth and developing good oral habits early. Other parents indicated that they didn't recognize the importance of oral health. One parent stated, "baby teeth fall out anyway and don't have nerve endings, so why care for them?" Pregnant women did not understand the importance of dental care during pregnancy. A number of myths were expressed about the effects of pregnancy on teeth such as "Pregnancy sucking the calcium out of your teeth." The author stated, "Most first-time expectant mothers lacked an understanding of the importance of primary teeth and how they should care for the oral health of their child after birth."

Communication was also a factor between parents and staff. Authors stated, "Many staff members struggled in achieving effective communication with parents and felt unable to persuade them that oral

NYUCD study shows flossing can decrease gum disease and cavities

A study from New York University College of Dentistry showed that flossing is effective when it comes to preventing gum disease and cavities. Dental researchers Dr. Patricia Corby and Dr. Walter Bretz published a study in the *Journal of Periodontology*, which "provides new data about the importance of a flossing regiment in addition to daily brushing of the surfaces of the teeth and tongue."

The study included 51 well-matched pairs of twins and tested their responses to dental flossing over a 2-week period. One twin would floss daily, while the other

would not. After the study authors found "putative periodontal pathogens and cariogenic bacteria were overabundant in the group that did not floss compared to the group that performed flossing." In addition, the twin who flossed had a "significant decrease in gingival bleeding compared to twins who did not floss." Overall bleed scores were reduced by 38% with flossers.

Because majority of the twins lived a similar lifestyle including dietary habits and health practices, they were considered perfect subjects for this type of research.

health is important and should be a priority at home." However, parents felt at time misunderstood by EHS staff even perceiving criticism and unfair judgment. Parents expressed difficulties in managing their demanding lives. They also stated that staff members were insensitive to their day to day activities.

Participants also expressed confusion regarding the application of Head Start oral health performance standard compared to EHS. "The need for culturally sensitive, hands-on oral health education was highlighted," authors said.

The writers concluded that "tailored, theory-based interventions are needed to improve communication between EHS staff and families."

Having clear policies on the application of Head Start oral health performance standards to EHS are necessary. The authors add that ed-

ucational activities should address the needs and suggestions of the participants.

Study shows older people are at risk for oral diseases

Older people are at risk for chronic mouth diseases, including dental infections, tooth loss, benign mucosal lesions, and oral cancer, according to the Department of Family Medicine at the Medical University of South Carolina. The most common conditions are xerostomia (dry mouth) and oral candidiasis. Xerostomia is usually caused by an underlying condition or medi-

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related bloodstream infections] among adults.” That said, this text might behoove the reader to explore areas that present differing recommendations.

This is an impressive text that requires a real commitment by the reader. It is, however, one that should be a part of any dental and medical practitioner’s armamentarium. While it may appear daunting to the new student, it provides multiple levels for the reader to access information so that they are not overwhelmed by its comprehensive nature.

Review of Oral Pathology: Clinical Pathologic Correlations

Regezi JA, Sciubba, JJ, and Jordan RCK,
WB Saunders Elsevier,
St. Louis, 2008, illustrated, indexed,
418 pages (with attached CD-ROM),
ISBN-10: 1416045708
ISBN-13: 978-1416045700
\$115.00

Reviewed by Margaret J. Fehrenbach, RDH, MS, a dental hygiene educational consultant and dental science technical writer, in Seattle, WA. Her website is www.dhed.net

The opening portion of the book, a clinical overview, is similar to an atlas of oral pathology, dividing orofacial lesion information into tables according to the clinical appearance (white lesions, red lesions, ulcerated lesions, etc.), along with some photographs of common lesions. This part of the book makes it easy to quickly identify and diagnose oral disease presentations that present in the dental setting. The rest of the book has expanded text about each lesion, again divided by clinical appearance. A paragraph about the differential diagnosis of each lesion is also included. A chapter on common skin lesions of the head and neck is a desired addition to most oral pathology texts.

One unique feature is additional index card-like tables in this discussion portion for quick review. With many of the lesions there is a corresponding histological view, which adds to the overall understanding of the lesion. However, the information on each lesion is not as expansive as needed for a basic course in oral pathology for a dental hygienist student.

This latest edition of the book has updated clear color photographs of even the rarest lesions, along with recent information on disease etiology and treatment. The areas of the discussion of pain, xerostomia, and halitosis are significantly expanded, and discussions of the molecular basis of cancers reflect the rapid advances in molecular medicine. However, using this type of

format, squamous cell carcinoma is noted under ulcerations, which is not always the case clinically. Missing is the discussion of the newest methods of early detection of oral cancer in the clinical setting and there is only limited information on HPV and its involvement in oral cancer.

References are somewhat current. A CD-ROM also comes with the text with case studies and practice questions that help with the study of the subject. An Elsevier Evolve site has additional resources for the student and instructor, as well as all the images.

Due to limited information on each lesion, the book would be more useful as a reference book in any dental clinic setting; far superior than any atlas of oral pathology. When confronted with an unknown lesion, the clinician could easily review the presented information to produce a dental hygiene diagnosis.

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our profession. The first piece is written by Drs. Ann Spolarich and Jane Forrest on utilization of the National Dental Hygiene Research Agenda.

Change is here for 2009. Whether you are reading the Journal in print or online, keep reading your professional journal. The staff at ADHA are committed to bringing you the highest quality scientific publication possible. It is YOUR journal.

Have a wonderful 2009!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Wilder, BSDH, MS
Editor in Chief: *Journal of Dental Hygiene*

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cation and can be treated by over-the-counter saliva substitutes. On the other hand, if oral candidiasis is left untreated, it could lead to acute pseudomembranous candidiasis (thrush), erythematous lesions (denture stomatitis), or angular cheilitis.

However, primary care physicians can help patients by assessing risk, recognizing versus abnormal changes of aging, performing a focus oral examination, and referring patients to a dentist, if needed.

Writers also add that patients might benefit from different types of oral health aids. They recommend electric toothbrushes, manual toothbrushes with wide-handle grips, and floss-holding devices. This may also benefit patients with chronic, disabling medical conditions such as arthritis and neurologic impairment.

Upfront was prepared by Eugenia Jefferson