

An Analysis of Oral Hygiene Instruction Education and Intervention at a Special Healthcare Facility

L. Hartung, H. Elias, S. Moon, M. Webb

Greenville, North Carolina, United States

Abstract

Objectives: Special Care individuals are an incredibly vulnerable population when it comes to oral health and oral health preservation. Caregivers and families of these patients play an integral role in the cultivation of certain beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge that society may have towards the oral health care and oral health routines of these individuals. Ensuring adequate dental literacy and efficient oral health habits of caregivers and thus family caretakers is an integral step in moving towards more optimal oral health worldwide. The aim of the present project is to explore the shift in oral health attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and the perception of the caregivers and family caretakers of special care patients at the Howell Center after the integration of an educational oral health instruction orientation tailored towards special care individuals.

Methods: A series of instructional videos and educational material was developed with information on the establishment and upkeep of proper oral hygiene routines for the special care patients at the Howell Center. The instructional video will then be shared with current caregivers at the center and subsequently integrated into the onboarding process for caregiving staff. The cross-sectional study will be conducted through a Self-Administered Questionnaire (SAQ). The SAQ is a questionnaire that explores caregivers' personal habits, as well as knowledge and attitudes on oral health after taking the training course. A myriad of caregivers in different departments of the Howell center were invited to complete the pre-survey SAQ, followed by the video training, followed by an immediate post survey SAQ to gauge knowledge and learning. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze data.

Results: Data was collected, analyzed, and compared using graphics. Overall, it was determined that through the utilization of this educational curriculum, a greater degree of caregiver confidence and material understanding was achieved. It was also observed that less than 50% of individuals surveyed go to the dentist, at minimum, the recommended amount (2 times per year).

How often do you go to the dentist?

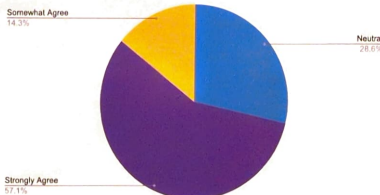


Introduction

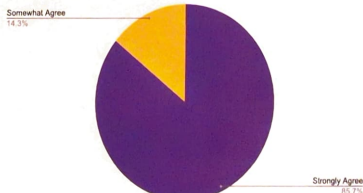
Special Care dentistry is an incredibly important part of the dental profession. Special care dentistry has various internal segmentations, all with the similar goal of delivering efficient and well rounded care for individuals with intellectual or developmental disorders. Advocacy for these patients is more important now, than ever, as policies and coverage are constantly and rapidly changing. Some individuals with special healthcare needs will be placed in long term care facilities to ensure that they receive the care that they need to maintain optimal care conditions. The Howell Center is a long term care facility in Greenville, North Carolina that specializes in the rehabilitation of ventilator dependent children. Their goal is to deliver the best possible care to these individuals, oftentimes, strengthening the health of their patients to a point where they no longer need to be on a ventilator. Oral health care is one of the many integral components of an overall health care plan that cannot be overlooked nor forgotten when considering full body wellness. There are a myriad of different knowledge levels and attitudes that may be encountered when surveying the general population on their familiarity of Special Healthcare patients and their needs. This project aimed to identify these attitudes, survey for base knowledge level, and analyze learning growths as a result of educational intervention.

Results

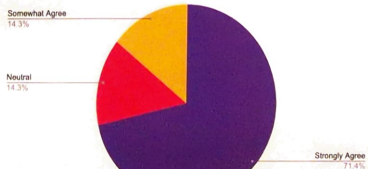
Pre-Survey: I am prepared and well educated enough to administer proper oral care to my patients



Post-Survey: I am prepared and well educated enough to administer proper oral care to my patient



The information in the video has changed how I will approach my own oral health



Methods

- An Oral Hygiene Instructional video was developed and filmed highlighting important aspects of Special Care Oral Hygiene routines
- A Pre and Post SAQ was developed using RedCap software to gauge learning and understanding as well as personal attitudes of those receiving the module
- The video was shown to several employees of the Howell Center and the corresponding surveys were distributed for data collection

Discussion

ough the duration of this project, an educational video was developed and presented to multiple employees at the Howell Center. The data was collected, analyzed, and compared using graphic representation. Thorough analysis brought several key conclusions to light. Through this study we found that educational intervention and reinforcement increased overall understanding and confidence in the surveyed population. Before watching the video, only 57.1% of participants Strongly Agreed that they were well prepared to take care of their patient population. After the educational curriculum, 85.7% of participants Strongly Agreed that they were prepared to take care of their patient population. This is an incredible improvement, and a great success in the progression of the standard of care for the patients of the Howell Center.

It was interesting to also analyze the attitudes of the participants of this study. The current recommendation for visiting the dentist is, at minimum, prophylaxis two times per year. Upon investigation, it was found that only 42.9% of participants in this study go to the dentist at least twice per year. This is a very important statistic to note when analyzing the attitudes of the caregivers of the Howell Center. Given that less than half of the study participants see the dentist on the regularly recommended basis, it is important to consider the degree to which these caregivers place an importance and emphasis on oral health, overall. In moving forward with this project, the hope is to continue gathering data. This study had a smaller subject pool than it was originally anticipated, causing some discrepancies in the data. With the inclusion of more data, a clearer picture of the impact that the educational curriculum has may be painted, and modification to improve understanding may be made more efficiently. Along with this, we would like to purchase handheld devices that the survey may be taken on, and the video may be accessed on. This would help with efficiency and personal focus. It is our hope that, in the future, this program may be a commonplace inclusion in, not only the staff onboarding and family take home curriculum, but that it may also be spread to other long term care facilities in North Carolina.

Conclusions

In conclusion, there are several key elements that should be analyzed. First, it is important to note the importance of education demonstrated by this project. From the data collected it can be observed that this educational intervention not only improved understanding, but also improved overall caregiver confidence in their preparation to serve their patients. This is incredibly important as confidence in understanding can lead to improved longevity of care for the patients. Another element that is of importance to analyze is the caregiver attitude towards oral care as a whole. Less than 50% of those individuals who were surveyed are seeing a dentist on a regulated schedule, at least 2 times per year. It is important to focus on the translation of care that may be occurring given this incidence. If a caregiver is not giving proper attention to their own oral care, and seeing the dentist on a regulated basis, what are the chances that they are putting enough attention into the oral care of their patients? When discussing oral care, it is crucial that caregivers are, not only delivering quality care to their patient population, but also that they understand the important behind why they are delivering this care and the reasons driving the delivery of care.

Moving forward, the hope is to continue providing education to caregivers of special care patients in long term care facilities. We would like to build upon our current data pool and continue to grow the research, increasing the amount of data that we have for analysis. In doing so, we would grow our understanding of learning, and thus have the ability to improve the curriculum accordingly.

Acknowledgements

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