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A randomized trial on root caries prevention in elders

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Root caries is common in institutionalized elders and effective prevention methods are needed. This clinical trial compared the effectiveness of four methods in preventing new root caries. From 21 residential homes, 306 generally healthy elders having at least 5 teeth with exposed sound root surfaces were randomly allocated into one of four groups: (1) Individualized oral hygiene instruction (OHI); (2) OHI and applications of 1% chlorhexidine varnish every 3 months; (3) OHI and applications of 5% sodium fluoride varnish every 3 months; and (4) OHI and annual applications of 38% silver diamine fluoride (SDF) solution. Two-thirds (203/306) of the elders were followed for 3 years. Mean numbers of new root caries surfaces in the four groups were 2.5, 1.1, 0.9, and 0.7 respectively (ANOVA, $p < 0.001$). SDF solution, sodium fluoride varnish and chlorhexidine varnish were more effective in preventing new root caries than giving OHI alone.

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Oral health needs of indigenous children accessing a new oral health service in Northern NSW, Australia

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Background: In Australia, the oral health of indigenous children is poor, with twice the mean DMFT scores that there are non-indigenous counterparts. With the majority of that being untreated decay. A community led oral health service was implemented using a community development approach for Northern NSW, Australian Indigenous communities in 2014. A survey of the children who access this service was conducted in an effort to determine: The extent of reported dental problems, attitudes and behavior to oral health, accessibility of oral health services previously and currently, patient satisfaction and cultural sensitivity of the service.

Methods: The study was carried out between June 2014 and December 2014. The questionnaire was interviewer assisted.

Results: A total of 48 indigenous children aged 0-14 (or parents of), provided responses to the survey. There were more females than males (62% vs. 38%). All 48 respondents agreed that healthy teeth were important to them, but perceived normalcy of oral disease including extraction was high. 83% reported experiencing oral pain at some stage, 29% were often in pain and 21% had been that way for more than 2 months. 30% didn't have easy access to toothbrush and toothpaste. 67% percent indicated that they consumed a lot of sugary foods and drink. Access to the new dental health service was reported as 'easy'. Nearly half did not have access to dental services outside of this new service. All respondents reported approval of their dental treatment, within the service, and that their Aboriginal heritage was respected by the oral health team.

Conclusions: The new oral health service to Northern NSW indigenous communities is a well utilized, respected and very much needed. Community education is needed to combat the current inverse views on the normalcy of oral disease. Development of health promotion programs is required to combat the poor oral health practices currently evident in the indigenous children in this community.

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