Integrating Oral Health with Primary Care: Engaging Community-based Preceptors

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University of Kentucky Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval
Protocol 12–0287–X1B

This study was approved by UK IRB 2012 as an exempt study

Key Personnel:

- Karen O. Skaff, Ph.D., Principal Investigator, College of Health Sciences, Department of Clinical Sciences
- Christa Blackwell, Research support, College of Health Sciences, Department of Clinical Sciences
- A. Stevens Wrightson, M.D., Associate Professor, UK College of Medicine, Department of Family Practice
- Melissa Kemp, RDH Student, Clinical Leadership & Management
Financial Support for this research:

- National Interprofessional Initiative on Oral Health (NIIOH)
- UK Department of Clinical Sciences
Need: Integrate Oral Health with Primary Care


- Institute of Medicine Report: Advancing Oral Health in America (2011) [www.iom.edu/reports](http://www.iom.edu/reports)

- National Inter-professional Initiative on Oral Health (NIIOH) Funding Initiatives


- AAPA Oral Health Needs Assessment Final Report

Smiles for Life is the nation's only comprehensive oral health curriculum. Developed by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Group on Oral Health and now in its third edition, this curriculum is designed to enhance the role of primary care clinicians in the promotion of oral health for all age groups through the development and dissemination of high-quality educational resources.

For Individual Clinicians

We've made it easy for individual physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, students, and other clinicians to access the curriculum and learn on their own time and at their own pace. Each of the courses is available online. Free CME credit is available.

For Educators

The curriculum is available in a presentation format easily implemented in an academic setting. Included is a comprehensive set of educational objectives based on the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) competencies, test questions, resources for further learning, oral health web links, an implementation guide, and detailed outlines of the modules.
Oral Cancer

Prevalence
- Ninth most common cancer
- Seven times more likely in the elderly
- Rising incidence in African American males

Etiology
- Alcohol and tobacco are principal risk factors
- Also HPV, syphilis and sunlight (lip)

Symptoms
- Red or white patches persisting beyond 2 weeks
- Ulcers that are non-healing or bleed easily
- Masses
Background Information:

- Health professionals need to understand the **connection between oral health and overall health** and to apply this knowledge to practice (IOM 2011)
- **Competency development** in oral-systemic health is integral to the prevention and treatment of oral disease
- Poor oral health and the **lack of attention to oral health** among primary care providers (Surgeon General Report, 2000) suggests important roles for non-dental providers such as physicians and physician assistants
- Engaging community based physician and physician assistant **preceptors may directly influence future practice** and specifically, oral cancer screening as part of routine care
To heighten awareness of community-based physician and physician assistant preceptors about their roles in educating physician assistant (PA) students to integrate oral health and primary care to perform oral cancer screenings as part of routine care.

Purpose of Research
Research Methods

- Survey community-based physician faculty preceptors
- Survey physician assistants practicing in Kentucky
- Assess physician assistant students’ learning outcomes (2012)
- Data analysis in process (2013)
- Assess physician assistant and nurse practitioner students
Results:
When asked how many current patients were routinely screened for oral cancer...

Less than 25% reported having routinely screened for oral cancer.
When asked if they had sufficient training to recognize and treat early signs of oral cancer …

PA-C (n=67)

- Yes: 17%
- No: 22%
- Somewhat: 58%

Physicians (n=31)

- Yes: 26%
- No: 30%
- Somewhat: 43%

Majority of Physician Assistants reported a need for training!
When asked if there was an interest in receiving updated information about Oral Cancer Screening in the future:

Physician (n=23) Response

- Yes: 65%
- No: 30%

PA-C (n=67) Response

- Yes: 73%
- No: 19%
When asked, Student Learning Outcomes:

1. What in particular about this topic peaked your interest?

2. How do you plan to integrate this information into your clinical practice?
What about this topic peaked your interest?

- 20 (n=59) or 34% surveyed stated, “... the statistics related to prevalence, detection, and survival rates”

- 30 (n=59) or 51% surveyed stated, “... the oral pathology review was eye-opening”. Most could not detect the difference between normal bony masses and cancerous lesions.
When asked how they plan to integrate this information into their clinical practice . . .

46 (n=59) or 78% said without prompting, that they would incorporate oral cancer screenings into their physical exams.
Discussion
Implications for Education
Why should Primary Care Clinicians, such as Physician Assistants, screen for Oral Cancer?
Physicians Assistants: Hold the Key…For all the right reasons

• You may be the *first point of contact* in primary care setting
• Patients want to *talk to you*
• You want to *listen to patients* to “get at the problem”
• You have expert *knowledge*
• You have excellent diagnostic and clinical *skills*
• You may be the **only** provider who sees patient
• You have credibility
• Ultimately, you have *responsibility* for diagnosis, referral, treatment and follow-up!
Reasons to care about it:

- **Clinical** … oral diseases undetected or detected too late
- **Ethical** … high quality accessible care is valued
- **Legal** … “best practices” and standards of care
- **Competency for Practice** … recognize need for training
- **Lack of access to dental care** … Integrate into primary care
- **Commit to a new perspective on the value of oral health as an integral part of the overall and then DO IT!**
Interprofessional Collaborative Practice

- Dentists and dental specialists
- Dental Hygienists
- Physicians and Physician Assistants
- Nurse Practitioners
- Other Non-dental providers
Recognize, Inform, Treat, and Refer:

- Screen for oral cancerous and pre-cancerous lesions
- Inform patient of suspicious area and the need
- Biopsy and referrals with follow-up – Call to set up appointment while there
- Educate patient to notice changes in oral cavity
- Motivate patient to reduce their risk of oral cancer
Evaluate the students:

- Use the **Smiles for Life** materials including questions in each module if you want to test using multiple choice test questions
- Create your own “Truth or consequences” assessment to determine their level of knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes
- Ask students to self-assess their knowledge and skills in the oral exam
- Ask students to assess each other during the practice lab … trade partners and switch to another student to practice exam
- Create a checklist for standard procedure in the oral exam
- Be creative and ask the supervising physician to assess the student during clinical rotation
- Use patient feedback to assess student interaction
Insert: Resources and References

- Smiles for Life National Oral Health Curriculum
- www.smilesforlifeoralhealth.org
- Alan Stevens Wrightson, M.D.
- Journals
- Websites
- Books
- Organizations – ADA, ADHA, PAEA, etc.
For additional information please contact:

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