Oral Health Promotion for Homeless People

Corwin Hine & Luke Fisher-Brown

Barts and The London
School of Medicine and Dentistry

www.smd.qmul.ac.uk

Background

- **DPH lecture course**
  - Social responsibility
  - Health promotion
  - Disease prevention

- **Invitation to participate in TeamUp Project:**
  - Opportunity to engage in health promotion project.
  - Practical application of DPH
  - Student led oral health promotion to homeless
  - Organised by London Deanery

Introduction

TeamUp Project Initiative:

- Assignment to establish a collaboration between stakeholders working with the homeless as part of the Olympic theme '*promoting health and wellbeing during 2012 and beyond*'.

- Partnering with St Mungo's – aimed at supporting their work assisting with the personalised recovery for homeless and excluded people, by educating clients and staff in aspects of dental health.

Oral Health Needs Assessment

- High risks of serious illness and premature death associated with homelessness.
- Link between poor oral health and general health.
- Barriers in gaining access to a GDS.
- Hierarchy of need – Oral health often compromised.
- **Development of Student led Oral Health Promotion.**
- Empower homeless to access dental services.
- Engage with Outreach Services to improve access.

Oral health status

- Homeless have significantly higher levels of untreated dental disease.
- Majority of homeless people choose to have their decayed teeth extracted rather than filled.
- High levels of edentulous.

Aims & Objectives

Aims:

- Promote awareness of oral health related issues amongst staff and clients at St Mungo's.

Objectives:

- Increase the understanding of oral health with emphasis on how diet, smoking and alcohol can negatively impact the oral cavity.
- Increase the understanding of NHS Dentistry, eligibility, costing and access.

Student Objective

- Educate
- Listen to patient's concerns & fears
- Answer questions
- Provide a chance to talk to a person with knowledge about dental health in an informal environment.
- Empower & motivate change

Intervention Methodology

- OH Prevention & Awareness Workshop
- Voluntary participation of staff & clients
- Conducted informally, based on participants concerns & questions.
- Q&A session
- OHI demonstration

Student Involvement

- Provide workshops (discussions) on 4 topics:
  - **Access to NHS Dentistry**
  - **Diet and Oral Health**
  - **Periodontal Disease**
  - **Smoking & Oral Cancer**

Distributed complimentary dental products

Project Expansion

- Summer 2013 – Partnered with Barts Health CDS.
- Provision of OH promotion in conjunction with CDS dental service.
- Attended dental outreach services with mobile unit and at fixed locations.
- Individualised OH promotion, based on treatment needs of patient.
- Noted patient feedback.

Oral Health Promotion with CDS

- Accompany patient to their dental appointment.
- Students offer preventative advice.
- Do the students save time/resources for the CDS?
- Valuable work experience.

Feedback from the homeless

- During the project we provided health promotion to ~40 patients, with only one refused to participate.
- Following a brief discussion/OH advise, patients were provided with toothpaste, mouthwash and a toothbrush sample.
- Feedback that was offered after the informal discussion was always positive.

Responses from Homeless

"I didn't realize that not keeping your mouth clean affects not just your teeth but also your gums"

"I have learnt things that may help me save the teeth I have remaining"

"Learnt some life changing instructions, I wish I had been told this earlier, I found the session really useful"

"I would like to have a nice smile again, so that I do not appear older than I am"

"Because of my oral health I have no confidence in myself and I have quit my social life"

Barts and The London
School of Medicine and Dentistry

www.smd.qmul.ac.uk

Future Potential

- Dental Public Health research study
- Participate in clinical care with CDS/screening programs
- Future career in Community Dental Service
- ***"Be the Change You Wish to See in the World"***

  -Mahatma Gandhi

Thank You for Listening
Any Questions?

Barts and The London
School of Medicine and Dentistry