Dental Hygienists’ Knowledge, Attitudes & Practices Regarding Oral Cancer Detection & Prevention

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Description
According to the National Cancer Institute, an estimated 35,310 new cases of oral cancer were expected to be diagnosed in the United States in 2008, and an estimated 7,590 people were expected to die of the disease. Statistics over the last decade reveal an increase in incidence and mortality rates for this disease. These statistics should encourage clinicians to improve awareness of and early detection of oral cancer.

Early detection of oral cancer is the responsibility of dental practitioners. Dental hygienists have a unique opportunity to provide oral cancer examinations for their patients. The purpose of this research was to investigate knowledge and practices of dental hygienists regarding oral cancer and explore issues related to early detection and prevention of oral cancer.

Disciplines
Dental Public Health and Education | Dentistry

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According to [Quan, 2002], the majority of dental hygienists felt comfortable assessing the risk factors of oral cancer. However, only a small percentage of hygienists were trained to assess the presence of lesions. The study found that hygienists' knowledge and self-assessment scores were positively correlated with their self-reported experience in assessing oral lesions.

**Results**

- **Knowledge Score of Self-Assessment:** A mean score of 100% was achieved by a significant number of hygienists.
- **Experience in Assessing Oral Lesions:** Only 25% of respondents reported feeling comfortable assessing oral lesions.
- **Training in Assessing Oral Cancer:** Only 10% of respondents reported being trained to assess the presence of oral cancer lesions.

**Conclusion**

The study highlights the importance of oral cancer education for dental hygienists. Further research is needed to develop effective training programs to improve hygienists' knowledge and skills in the detection and prevention of oral cancer.

**References**

