The Importance of Implementing Oral Health Care Education in the Lehigh Valley

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The Importance of Implementing Oral Health Care Education in the Lehigh Valley

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Introduction

- In the United States, the epidemic of poor oral hygiene is a continuing problem that is leading to a range of other chronic conditions in people.
- Periodontal disease is seen in 1 out of every 2 American adults over the age of 30. The concern with periodontitis is that people who do have the condition are 40% more likely to have a chronic illness on top of it.
- The chronic illnesses that arise due to poor oral health include:
- Finding a way to get the information to the population in the Lehigh Valley Health Network about the significance of oral hygiene and ways to improve their oral health could eliminate the amount of people with urgent and severe dental problems, as well as improve their chronic illnesses.

Objectives

- Propose a new plan for patient education in the 17th Street Clinic
- Create an idea for an effective pamphlet to inform patients about the risks associated with poor oral health
- Improve oral hygiene education for the patients of the dental clinics within the Lehigh Valley Health Network - 17th Street Clinic

Methodology

Clinical Observation - LVHN 17th Street Dental Clinic

Our observation of clinical practice at the 17th Street clinic in Allentown, PA provided better understanding of patient population, level of education, and the cause of their dental problems.

Observed Current Patient Education System

The clinic has a program for oral hygiene education, but its content and distribution can be improved.

Propose a Plan for Better Patient Education

The current pamphlet needs to be revised for the patient pool that is being served. When improving the content and information, it must be informative and representative of proper oral hygiene in the simplest way possible. The improved pamphlet will need to include information regarding proper daily routine, possible consequences of not following a routine, and understanding overall oral health.

Expected Results

- Immediately after an increase in education and a solidified initial treatment plan is made, it is hopeful and expected that patients will be more aware of their oral health and the amount of additional treatment needed would be reduced.
- After implementation of the new education plan we expect to see a decrease in the number of patients with common dental related issues such as carries, periodontal disease, and overall healthiness of the teeth and surrounding tissues.

Recommendations

- Improved educational pamphlet
- Multi-lingual Video Tutorial
- Effective communication of staff to demonstrate proper oral hygiene with patients
- Increased distribution of the information

Conclusions

- In order for there to be significant improvement the plan needs to be implemented and reviewed with the entire staff in the dental clinic.
- This quality improvement project with help the entire Lehigh Valley Health Network community improve the quality of life for patients.

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Figure 1. Chart of the data collected from the CDC of adults aged 18-64 within a 6 month period with dental related problem who did not seek professional help or advice.