Oral Health for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs

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Individuals with Special Health Care Needs (ISHCN)

• Definition from the American Dental Association:

Patients with special needs are those who due to physical, medical, developmental or cognitive conditions require special consideration when receiving dental treatment. This can include people with autism, Alzheimer’s disease, Down syndrome, spinal cord injuries and countless other conditions or injuries that can make standard dental procedures more difficult.
Prevalence of ISHCN

• In 2012, **20.3%** of adults in **Virginia** reported having a disability, compared with **21.4%** in the **U.S. (1 out of 5 adults)** -
  
  [http://dhds.cdc.gov](http://dhds.cdc.gov)

• In 2009, **20% (380,525)** children 0-17 in **Virginia** were reported as having special health care needs, compared with **19.8% (14.6 million)** children in the **U.S. (1 out of 5 children)** –
  
  [http://www.childhealthdata.org/learn/NS-CSHCN](http://www.childhealthdata.org/learn/NS-CSHCN)
Background

• 1 out of every 4 adults in Virginia have at least one tooth lost to decay or gum disease (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention 2004-2006 survey)

• People with disabilities are approximately 1 ½ times more likely to have tooth loss

• Most dental diseases can be prevented!
• Health inequities exist by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, geography, gender, immigrant status and other social classifications

• Cultural awareness is not only race/ethnicity and socioeconomic: consider the disability community as well
Barriers to Dental Care for ISHCN

- Financial – private pay, insurance, lack of Medicaid coverage
- Community support: accessible dental clinics, transportation, funding, education and awareness
- Communication
- Behavior guidance
- Perceptions: need? confidence? fear?
  - primary health care provider
  - family/caregiver
  - individual
  - dental professional
Perceptions in Practice

Family

Dental Needs:
What is the individual’s/family’s goal for oral health and overall health?

Community Support

Setting the tone:
Is the dentist comfortable working with ISHCN and their families?

Dentist

Patient with SHCN

Support:
Has the staff been trained to work with ISHCN and their families?

Front Desk

Asst and/or Hyg
Five Common Oral Hygiene Related Conditions for ISHCN

- Rumination, gastric reflux, vomiting
- Pouching
- Oral self-injury
- Pica
- Xerostomia
Rumination, Gastric Reflux, and Vomiting

**Rumination:** chew, swallow, regurgitate, chew again

**Result**
- High acid
- Erosion
- Increased sensitivity

**Recommendations**
- Fluoridated water rinse or baking soda rinse, $\frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda with 1 cup water
- Increase fluoride use

[aapd.org](http://aapd.org)
Pouching: holding excess or remnants of food in the buccal folds due to lack of muscular control

Result

• Increased caries
• Increased periodontal disease

Recommendation

• Increase oral hygiene efforts
• Assistance of caregiver to check and clear debris
Oral Self-Injury

Is it habit or is it an attempt to communicate a problem?

Result: damage to teeth or oral tissues

Recommendation

• Comprehensive examination
• Behavior modification
• Consultation with medical professionals
• Mouth guard

aapd.org
Pica

Habitually ingesting non-nutritive items after the age of 18 months – 2 years
Clay, cigarette butts, paint, feces, stones, vinyl, plastic, pencil erasers, fingernails, coal, paper, etc.
Most common eating disorder in people with developmental disabilities

Result
Damage to teeth or oral tissues
Physical illness and medical complications
Pica

Recommendations

• Behavior modification
• Multidisciplinary approach
  o psychologist
  o social worker
  o physician
  o dentist
Xerostomia

• Saliva production reduced by > 50%
• Caused by medications, chemo, radiation, etc.

Result
• Decreased ability to fight bacteria
• Decreased natural cleansing of the mouth from salivary flow
• Increased caries and periodontal disease
Xerostomia

Recommendations

• Increase fluoride use
• Saliva replacement
  o multiple brands
  o drops
  o rinses
  o sugar free candy & gum: depending on age/abilities
  o systemic medications (Rx)
Alternative or Modified Oral Hygiene Procedures

- Positioning
- Handle modifications
Positioning Alternatives

- Varies according to comfort of caregiver and person needing assistance
- Move out of the bathroom?
- Head, neck and body support: chair, couch, bean bag, bed, floor, etc.
- Less threatening, more soothing
- Approach from behind or beside
- Follow uncontrolled body movements
Oral Hygiene Tool Modifications

- Battery operated toothbrushes
- Tennis ball or bicycle grip
- Taped handles
- Foam tubing
- Lengthen by taping to ruler
- Bending toothbrush handle
- Velcro strip, rubber tubing
- Larger or textured grips
- Weighted handles
Oral Hygiene Tool Modifications

- Three sided toothbrush
- Floss holders
- Sponge swabs / Toothettes
Mouth Props

- Mouth props to gain better caregiver access
  - wrap tape around several tongue depressors
  - sterilized door stop (be aware of potential latex allergy)
  - mouth props purchased from dental companies
Dental Appointments for ISHCN

• Information needed for ISHCN that call for appt: type of disability, assistive equipment, developmental age, etc.

• ‘Get to know you’ office visit
  o desensitizing
  o tour the office
  o review medical history and office policies

• Early morning appts. or right after lunch
  o less crowded, easier to navigate
  o quieter
VDH “Find A Dentist” online tool & resources

• [http://www.vahealth.org/dental](http://www.vahealth.org/dental)

• Directory compiled to identify Virginia dentists who will care for adult or child patients with special needs and children under 3 years

• Dentists who have responded to a questionnaire from the Virginia Department of Health

• Dentists: please add your contact information or update your information

• Information on oral health trainings
Online Resources for Oral Health Information

American Dental Association
http://www.mouthhealthy.org/

American Dental Hygienists’ Association
www.adha.org/oralhealth/index.html
  click on ‘Patient Resources’

Academy of General Dentistry
www.knowyourteeth.com
Online Resources for Oral Health Information

Specialized Care Company
http://www.specializedcare.com
commercial company; good tools and video on brushing someone else’s teeth

Washington state has developed fact sheets regarding people with special needs:
http://dental.washington.edu/departments/omed/decod/special_needs_facts.php
(see next slide for screenshot of website)
ADHD
Anxiety
Asthma
Autism
Cerebral Palsy
Cleft Lip & Palate
Congenital Cardiac Disorder
Depression
Diabetes
Down Syndrome
Eating Disorder
Epilepsy
Hearing Impaired
HIV
Intellectual Disability
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
Free Continuing Education Opportunities

Practical Oral Care for People with Developmental Disabilities: Making a Difference

- instructional material and CE test is available in hard copy today (while supplies last) and online
- 2 credit hours geared toward dental professionals

National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center

- http://www.mchoralhealth.org/SpecialCare/
- 5 free online modules geared toward medical/dental professionals
Final Thoughts

• Yes, dental providers for ISHCN are desperately needed!

• It takes a community of well-informed dental advocates to reduce dental health disparities in Virginia!
Questions???
Contact Information

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