

Improving Oral Health of Pregnant Women

Dr. Shillpa Naavaal

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VCU

School of Dentistry

Pregnancy and Oral Health

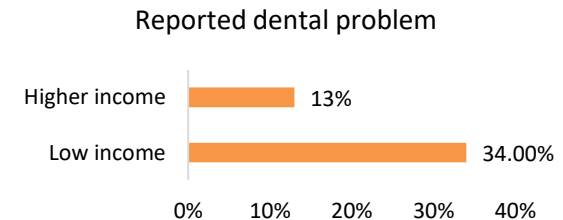
- Pregnancy increases women's risk for oral health problems.
- Evidence suggests associations between periodontal diseases and birth outcomes.
- Poor maternal oral health has implications for newborn's health.
- Dental care during pregnancy is safe and should be promoted.

Dental Care During Pregnancy
is **Safe and Important**



Oral Health Disparities

- Women from low income, less educated and minority groups have higher likelihood of dental disease and less likelihood of dental visit during pregnancy.
- In Virginia, only 44% of pregnant women visited dentist in 2011.
- Nearly 1 in every 5 women reported having dental problem during pregnancy.
- Beginning March 1st, dental benefit for pregnant women in Medicaid was established.
- VDH received “The Perinatal and Infant Oral Health Quality Improvement Expansion Grant” to improve oral health among pregnant women and infants in Virginia.



Multipronged Approach

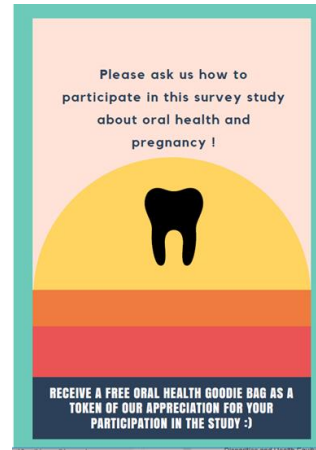
- Research
 - Primary data collection
 - Secondary data analysis
- Systems level change
- Educational and awareness

Primary Survey Data

- Survey study to understand knowledge about oral health and pregnancy among Virginia women including barriers to oral care and awareness of Medicaid dental benefit.
- Inclusion criteria- women between 21-45 years of age, currently pregnant or is mother to a child.
- Primary data collection using paper pencil survey in English and Spanish.

Results

- Awareness of dental benefit is low.
- Medicaid women face more barriers, and have less oral health knowledge compared to women with private insurance.



PRAMS Data

- Data from 2012 to 2014 was used- latest available (pre policy change data).
- Objective was to estimate the use of dental care among women in Virginia and identify associated factors.

Results

- Improvement over 2011 utilization estimates.
- 56% of VA women had pre-pregnancy dental cleaning visit and 47% had cleaning visit during pregnancy.
- Report of dental problem did not change from 2011 estimates.
- Dental insurance was strongly associated with pre-pregnancy and during pregnancy dental visits.
- During pregnancy dental visit was influenced by pre-pregnancy dental visit and oral health promotion by health provider.
- Prenatal health care providers can encourage and educate pregnant women about oral health importance.

DMAS Data

- Department of Medical Assistance Services, DMAS provides information on pregnant women dental care use.
- According to 2016 report to general assembly, 9000 women out of eligible 45,000 have utilized dental benefit since its inception.
- Our preliminary analysis of DMAS data shows increase in utilization.
- Significantly high number of participants and claims in 2016 and 2017 compared to 2015.
- DMAS data will be further analyzed to evaluate the impact of policy change on dental utilization.

Systems Level Change

- Medical-dental collaboration is one of the key elements in improving oral health of pregnant women.
- Medical care providers see pregnant women multiple times for their prenatal visit.
- ACOG guidelines are available.
- Needs to reduce missed opportunity by improving awareness and knowledge of prenatal health care providers.

VCU dental and VCU health systems collaboration to improve referral for pregnant women to dental care

- Data shows that more than 50% of women do not have regular dentist and only one third saw dentist in the past 6 months.
- To improve oral health utilization among pregnant women,
 - Educational seminars for providers and staff were conducted
 - Targeted dental care brochures for pregnant patients were developed
 - Protocols for referral developed
 - Protocols to streamline the Medicaid patient intake at SOD were developed
- Further work continues to improve collaboration.

Other Projects

- To complement the quantitative survey study, we are also collecting qualitative data using interviews with women enrolled in Medicaid.
 - Understand the barriers these women face and experiences they had when using the dental benefit program.
- Another study to understand healthcare provider practices regarding oral health and their awareness of Medicaid dental benefit.
 - Examine prenatal care provider oral health knowledge and practices.

Policy and Research Implications

- Disparities remain
- Reduce barriers to oral health care among pregnant women
- Improve knowledge among women, especially low-income women
- Increase awareness of Medicaid dental benefit among pregnant women
- The continuum of care must be addressed and promoted
- Dental- Medical partnerships/collaborations
- Reduce missed opportunities
- Educate, recommend and refer