



Enhancing Communication between Dental and Healthcare Providers

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Introduction

Diabetes in California:

- In 2007, 2.7 million adults had diabetes (1 out of 10).
- In 2007, 7.9 million(28%) are estimated to have pre-diabetes (1 in 3).
- Diabetes prevalence in the Central Valley is 7.7 %, one of the highest in California, with 230,000 people diagnosed with diabetes.

Periodontitis and Diabetes:

- Diabetes is a risk factor for severe periodontal disease because the high levels of glucose in the mouth encourage bacterial growth and increase the patient's susceptibility to infections.
- Recent studies indicate severe periodontal disease is associated with poor diabetes control.
- Regardless of recommendations for an annual visit, only 62% of people with diabetes had seen a dentist in the last 12 months.
- Despite the link between oral health and good diabetes control, dentists and primary care providers often do not make the link or communicate it to their patients.

Methods

- The Central Valley Chronic Disease Partnership (CVCDP) addressed the communication gap between primary healthcare providers and dentists by coordinating a symposium targeting both professional disciplines.
- The CVCDP is a coalition that provides high-quality educational conferences to improve the delivery of treatment for people with chronic diseases and reduce the burden of the disease in California's Central Valley.
- The symposium topic and presentation was developed in consultation with both dental and medical care providers during a focus group.
- An evaluation was distributed to participants at the conclusion of the symposium.

Symposium Objectives:

- Recognize and list the symptoms of diabetes and their association with oral disease.
- Provide patient strategies to reduce the risk for mouth infections associated with diabetes.
- Identify and utilize local resources for diabetes management.
- Develop effective communication tools between healthcare providers and high risk patients.

Results

A combined total of 64 dental and health care providers attended the symposium.

- Of the **18 participants** that worked in **medical offices or public health field**, **44%** (n=8) indicated that 6 months prior to attending the symposium they had never recommended their patients with diabetes see a dentist.
- Of the **13 participants** that worked in **dental offices**, **61%** (n=8) had never or seldom recommended their patients with diabetes see a doctor.
- After attending the symposium, **71% of the attendees** (n=22) indicated that they will always recommend patients with diabetes see a primary care provider or dentist, as appropriate.
- Of respondents, **85%** (n=23) rated the event as "outstanding" and **15%** (n=4) as "very good".

References

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Conclusions

- Medical care and dental care providers can provide consistent messages to address the benefits of both diabetes control and oral health.
- A symposium of just two hours can generate provider behavioral intentions to collaborate.

Recommendations for Healthcare and Dental Providers to Reduce the Risk for Oral Infections:

- Request a complete health history.
- Conduct Visual Assessment.
- Inquire if they are experiencing any of the basic diabetic symptoms and if a family member has been diagnosed with diabetes.
- Communicate the importance of total body health.
- Provide written material for patient to share with family members.
- Discuss home care such as diet, exercise, oral hygiene and, if appropriate, smoking cessation strategies.
- Refer them to either a primary care provider or dentist.

Periodontitis



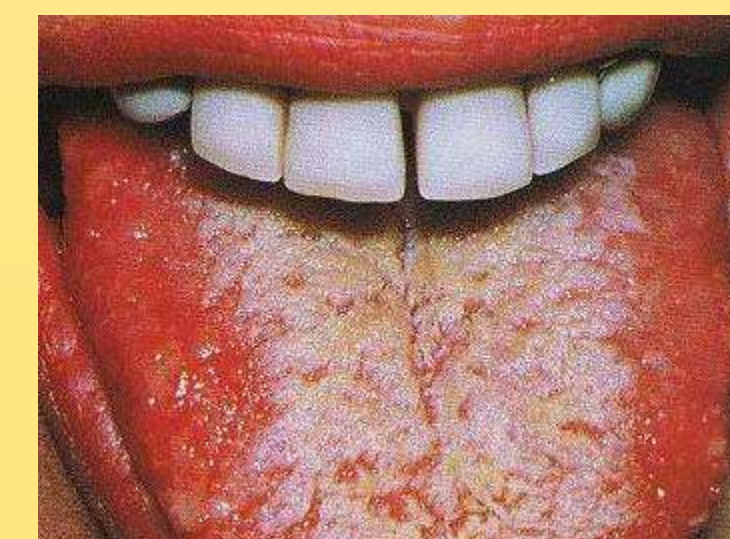
Healthy Gingiva



Gingivitis



Severe Periodontal with Disease



Diabetes Patient Periodontitis



Diabetes Information Resource Center (DIRC) www.caldiabetes.org