



A Nurse Practitioner Led Community Based, Project to Improve the Oral Health of Preschool Children in Newark, New Jersey

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BACKGROUND

- Oral health is a leading health disparity in the U. S for adults and children^{1, 2}
- Dental caries are the leading chronic illness in children^{2, 3}
- Poor children in urban & rural areas have unmet oral health needs^{1,3}
 - Provider shortage
 - Poor/no access
- More than ¼ of preschoolers have at least one carious lesion prior to kindergarten.³
- Topical fluoride varnish reduces childhood caries^{3,4}
 - Inexpensive
 - Effective
 - Underutilized
- Children b/w 0 & 6 y/o, are seen frequently for routine preventive healthcare.⁴
- It is w/in the scope of PNP practice to assess child's oral health, apply fluoride varnish (FV) and refer as necessary^{5,6}
- PNPs report low confidence levels for assessing oral health and applying fluoride varnish.⁵



PROBLEM STATEMENT/PURPOSE

- Children in urban areas are at increased risk for oral disease.
- PNPs lack training in oral health assessment & FV application.

The purpose of this project:

- Determine the impact of a community based, oral health assessment and fluoride varnish application program for preschoolers.
- Train PNP students to perform oral health assessment and FV application
- Foster inter-professional learning opportunities between nursing and dentistry.

Project Period:

- May 2016 - June 2017



METHODOLOGY/PROTOCOL



- Sample: 46 low income children ages 2-11 years old (25 for analysis); 7 Rutgers University 4th Yr pediatric DNP students

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Caregiver Dental Insurance		
Yes	16	64
No	4	16
Not Answered	5	20
Child Dental Insurance		
Yes	16	64
No	5	20
Not Answered	4	16
Medicaid Eligible (children)		
	25	100
Existing Dental Home (Caregiver & Child)		
	25	100

- Setting: Community preschools in Newark, NJ
- PNP students completed Smiles for Life National Oral Health Curriculum Module. In class Lecture and practicum by PNP. Training at community site with pediatric dentist.
- PNP, BSN students, dental students and dental residents worked together during community health fairs to perform oral health assessments and education.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Variable	Frequency	Percent
White Spots (Early Caries)		
Yes	8	32
No	15	60
Not Documented	2	8
Caries		
Yes	7	28
No	18	72
Restoration		
Yes	19	12
No	3	76
Not Documented	3	12
Visible Plaque		
	15	60
Caries Risk		
Low	8	32
High	17	68
Dental Referral		
	15	60

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

- FV in urban community settings is a low cost and effective way to assess oral health and refer for treatment
- Oral health assessment and practicum can easily be incorporated into PNP curriculum
- FV training will continue for RUSON PNP students

LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

