

INTEGRATION OF MEDICAL HEALTHCARE WORKERS INTO ORAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN NIGERIA



PRESENTED BY:

Ohwofasa Mamuyovwi Edwin,
Final Year Dental Student,
School of Dentistry, College of Medical Sciences, University of Benin
Benin, Nigeria
ohwofasaedwin@gmail.com

REFERENCES



INTRODUCTION

Oral health awareness in Nigeria has been shown to be very low, as proven by studies on different population groups in Nigeria. A population of 102 million Nigerians would require around 36,400 full-time dentists based on the WHO's broad-brush dentist-to-population ratio recommendation of 1:5,000 for developing nations (1). Nigeria currently has about 220 million people, making it one dentist for every 78,509 people (2). There is therefore need for integration of medical healthcare workers in helping to promote awareness to prevent oral diseases. Other healthcare professionals can help in tackling the issue of poor oral health awareness in the nation, as studies on different population groups in Nigeria indicate a low awareness and poor attitude toward oral health care (3, 4, and 5). Medical doctors and nurses can help to promote oral health when they attend their patients, as this will foster a higher percentage of patient referrals to the dentist for proper management of the patient's condition.

OBJECTIVES

- To survey oral health education among medical doctors, nurses, and other health workers.
- To better oral hygiene and general health.

METHODOLOGY

I will conduct a pre- and post-oral health survey among healthcare professionals as part of the methods outlined for this research.



Surveying Health workers on Oral Health



Promoting Oral Health Awareness among Health Professionals



Increasing awareness using the Medical Association Platform on social media



Collaboration with Medical Team during our Oral Health Programs

Fig. 1: Methodology for the Integration of Medical Health Workers into Oral Health Awareness

RESULTS

While I await ethical clearance to approve my survey of oral health education among medical doctors, nurses, and other health workers, here are results from similar studies.

The diagram below shows the result of a survey conducted among family physicians on their oral health awareness and practices (6).



Fig. 2: Result showing the Knowledge of Oral Health care and practices among Family Physicians

Medical physicians are likely the first point of contact for patients with oral diseases in developing nations where there is a lack of oral health personnel and inadequate oral health facilities.

As a result, they are well-positioned to support early detection and fast referrals for oral disorders. This was corroborated in an aforementioned study, where 95.1% of Family doctors had been consulted by their patients regarding oral symptoms (7). Furthermore, a study of doctors at HIV-specific clinics in Nigeria revealed that just 30.5% of patients were directed to the dentist, with 75.6% of patients consulting them for one or more oral issues (8).

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the level of oral health awareness in Nigeria is low in all its ramifications, and the implications of this may be graver than we have assumed. We need an enormous amount of other health professionals to join in the promotion of oral health awareness.



a.



b.



c.



d.

- Improve Oral Health Knowledge and Perception
- Advocate Against Smoking
- Provide Oral Health Services for Under-served Populations
- Advocate for less sugar consumption



Fig. 3: Diagram illustrating various ways medical health workers can help promote Oral Health awareness