

Diet advice in the dental setting: practitioners' perceptions and evaluation of an online training module

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Introduction

Dental practitioners agree that dietary analysis and nutritional counselling are essential for caries prevention, however, they infrequently implement these methods due to a lack of confidence and competence

Aims

This project aims to improve nutritional counselling in dental practices through an online training module and determine how effective the training module is in changing attitudes, knowledge and behaviour.

Rationale

Poor diet is a significant contributor to oral disease, particularly dental caries, yet very few dental practitioners provide nutritional counselling on a regular basis, or it is often limited when provided. Dietary assessment is important because it guides dental professionals when providing nutritional counselling, allowing them to tailor their advice to suit different patients.

Methodology

Participating dentists will complete an online learning module, providing them with evidence based information and guidelines for using the diet assessment of caries risk form, implementing the 5As approach to nutritional counselling, and key messages for patients. Practitioners will be prompted to complete a brief online survey prior to commencing to ascertain current perceptions and barriers to dietary advice provision, and also at the completion of the online module to reassess their perceptions and barriers to dietary advice provisions.

What are the expected outcomes?

It is anticipated this project will:

- have a positive impact on caries through decreased levels of caries risk attributed to diet; and
- improve confidence and competence of dental practitioners providing nutritional counselling.

