

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

Dental practitioners agree that dietary analysis and nutritional counselling are essential for caries prevention.

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.

eviDent has recently approved a new project that 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.

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.

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.

Can you help with a research study on improving diet advice in the dental setting?

Dr Melanie Hayes, PhD, of the University of Melbourne Dental School, is seeking dental practitioners to take part in a study on improving current clinical practice in the area of diet and nutrition. Participants would complete a survey on current practices, and then receive online training in simple diet assessment and nutritional counselling. The online module should take no more than 30 minutes to complete, and then practitioners will be followed up in 6 months' time to see if their perceptions on dietary advice have changed.

The results will aim to improve current practices and contribute much-needed information to the under-researched evidence base for the role of dietary analysis and nutritional counselling in reducing caries risk in the community.

Can you assist with this study, or would you like more information? If so, please contact Dr. Hayes, PhD, by 31 July 2015 at melanie.hayes@unimelb.edu.au.

For further information about eviDent visit www.evident.net.au

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The Australian Taxation Office has endorsed the eviDent Foundation ABN 81 152 078 487 as a Health Promotion Charity and as a Deductible Gift Recipient. eviDent's fundraiser registration number is 11984.15 (valid 6 June 2015 to 5 June 2018).