

Children's Dental Program

Project No:	005	Commencement Date:	January 2013
Chief Investigator A:	Prof Mike Morgan	Completion Date:	January 2014
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Support:	Plenty Valley Community Health		

Introduction

Plenty Valley Community Health (PVCH) is one of many Victorian government dental agencies committed to community engagement and improving client access to its services. When the School Dental Services was transferred to the community health services environment in 2007, decisions on how to promote children's dental services to the community, how to manage demand, balance priority care between children's dental and adult dental became local decisions. It has been identified that the children most vulnerable to dental disease are the least likely to access services. A recent publication by the Department of Health (Victoria) showed that only 22.8% of the eligible population were treated in 2009-2010. This falls significantly below the benchmark by the Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2004-2012 that all children should receive at least one course of general oral health care including appropriate oral health promotion every two years.

Aims

- To investigate the current patterns of child attendance for dental visits since Dental Health Services Victoria School Dental Services was integrated into community health services from 2007.
- To determine whether school-based dental screening retain high-needs child patients for oral health care using the existing publicly funded community health services.

Rationale

This pilot study seeks to promote regular and timely dental attendance of children identified in need of dental treatment. It will investigate the value of school dental screening in disadvantaged populations.

Methodology

Children involved the study will have a dental screening visit at their school to assess whether dental care is required. Children who are considered to not need treatment will be offered a review visit in 6 months; children who require dental treatment will be offered an appointment at PVCH. There will be a semi-structured interview collecting data regarding the child's dental and social history.

What are the expected outcomes?

It is anticipated this project will provide PVCH with information about:

- patterns of attendance for children having dental check-ups;
- rate of attendance for children identified as requiring dental care;
- rate of 'failed to attend' appointments; and
- dental caries experience and dental caries risk.

