

Diagnosis, treatment and maintenance of periodontal patients by general dentists

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Introduction

There are relatively few reports regarding periodontal therapies in the general dental practice setting. This project is a survey of Victorian dental practitioners to determine the criteria used to establish a periodontal diagnosis, what periodontal therapies are used and who subsequently provides periodontal therapies within general practices.

Aims

To determine the criteria used in general practices to:

1. Establish a diagnosis of health, gingivitis or mild, moderate or severe periodontitis.
2. Triage periodontal care of patients with periodontitis among the dental hygienist, general dentist and periodontist.
3. Determine the interval of maintenance and recall of patients after active periodontal therapy.

Rationale

The project will address:

- What clinical criteria are used to establish a diagnosis of health; gingivitis; or mild, moderate or severe periodontitis?
- What decision making criteria are used by dentists as patients, diagnosed with gingivitis or periodontitis, are triaged among dental hygienists, the general dentist and periodontal specialist?
- What periodontal therapies are employed for the treatment of patients with gingivitis, mild, moderate or severe periodontitis?
- Are adjunctive chemotherapeutics such as therapeutic oral rinses used?
- What are the criteria for determining the interval for maintenance and recall visits for patients with periodontitis?

Methodology

The data will be collected through the use of a case-based questionnaire. After completing background questions, the practitioner will be presented with clinical scenarios corresponding to health, gingivitis, mild, moderate or severe periodontal disease. For each scenario the practitioner will be asked to:

- Detail the examinations and tests typically provided in response to the scenario
- Give a periodontal diagnosis
- Select typical periodontal therapies typically provided by the GP or referred to specialist for that diagnosis
- Select the maintenance and recall interval and procedures for that scenario.

At the completion of five clinical scenarios, the practitioner will be asked questions regarding the criteria for referral to a periodontist.

What are the expected outcomes?

It is anticipated this project will determine the criteria used to establish a periodontal diagnosis, what types of periodontal therapies are provided and who provides periodontal therapy within general dental practices.