DENT-TEEN
An Oral Health Promotion Program for Adolescents in Cowra

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are an especially vulnerable group to diverse dental complications. This was exacerbated in Cowra due to the lack of education regarding oral health, as well as the lack of focus in primary prevention. Additionally there had been no prior oral health promotion programs completed for adolescents in Cowra.

This program directed attention towards oral health, common oral conditions and the related prevention, risk factors and treatment methods, and also provided knowledge to develop relevant oral hygiene skills and to deliver key oral health messages.

AIM

This project aimed to educate adolescents aged 12-15 years old in Cowra as well as the PDHPE teaching staff members about the importance of oral health as an integral part of their optimum general health and quality of life.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The ‘Dent-teen’ oral health promotion program was designed and implemented in both Cowra’s high schools. Pre-questionnaires were distributed, and the findings were utilised in developing an innovative 40 minute presentation consisting of key oral health information with videos, volunteers, demonstrations and discussions. The schools were also equipped with supplementary resources including the ‘Oral Health Flipchart’, OHP posters and samples to improve the sustainability of this program over time. Post-questionnaires and interviews were conducted to analyse its’ quality and success.

RESULTS

• A total of 109 students and 4 PDHPE teachers participated in the program.
• An increased ability to recognise the overall importance of oral health as part of their general health resulted.
• Participants were able to identify common dental conditions and associated risk factors as well as distinguish tools and regimes for good oral hygiene.
• Both PDHPE leading staff members stated they would further utilise the program within the PDHPE curriculum.

DISCUSSION

During verbal discussion after the program delivery, most students reported they were more confident in their knowledge and skills than prior to the program, as shown in the pre-questionnaire results analysis. For improved success and sustainability of this program, allied health professionals in Cowra were contacted and provided information regarding correct oral hygiene practices and key oral health messages.

CONCLUSION

The project was successful in providing both students and teaching staff with appropriate oral health education and skills. Inclusion of the program by the PDHPE teachers into their lesson plans will be required to provide the sustainability and ongoing success.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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 NSW Health
 Cowra High School
 St Raphael’s Catholic School
 Colgate
 COHS NSW

REFERENCES

• Google Maps (2014). Cowra NSW. Retrieved 22 August 2014, from Google:


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The Oral Health Promotion Program featured in the Cowra Guardian on 14th April 2014 which brought community awareness.