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Improving the use of fluoride varnish applications among children

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Objective: The objective of this study was to evaluate if adding a prompt to well-child visits will increase provider adherence of apply fluoride varnish to children over a three-month period?

Methods: At baseline, 1508 children aged 12-36 months of age at pre-intervention were evaluated at Community Health Center, Inc. in Central Florida and 1290 children post-intervention. Fluoride varnish can be applied every three months. Providers were given an in-service regarding benefits and application of fluoride varnish with ten question pre- and post-questionnaires. Questionnaire means were evaluated for any changes post in-service compared to pre-in-service. Pre- and post-fluoride intervention was evaluated using Chi-square test.

Results: Fluoride application rates improved after EHR prompt implementation with 44.8 percent of children receiving fluoride varnish compared to 30.8 percent at baseline, an increase of 14 percent in three months (Chi-square=59.239, p-value=0.00, p<0.05). Pre- and post-questionnaires reflected that provider education increased knowledge regarding fluoride placement and prevention of dental caries.

Conclusion: Dental caries in children is a chronic disease that can have long-term negative health outcomes with greatest effect on uninsured and minority children. Fluoride varnish application can assist in reducing the rate of dental caries in children. Provider education and addition of an EHR prompt can be beneficial in increasing the use of fluoride treatment and potentially decreasing the incidence of dental caries in children.

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