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Dental Emergencies Resource Training May Be Useful for Rural/Remote Primary Care Providers

General practice and Emergency Department (ED) primary care providers are often presented with patients suffering a dental emergency, yet they possess limited knowledge, skills, and resources to manage them effectively. In a study conducted by Skapetis, Gerzina, and Cameron (2013), 242 Australian health care providers participated in a 4-hour multimodal education workshop covering topics such as dental nomenclature, traumatic dental injuries, dental anesthesia, and dental infections. Eight of the fifteen workshops were conducted for regional and rural hospital ED doctors. Following the workshops, attendees were provided with dental resource units and then surveyed regarding the resource kit's perceived usefulness. Results from workshop participant questionnaires (n=181) indicated that almost 30% of respondents (54% in rural practice) had used the dental resource in the past 6 months, and the Emergency Dental Handbook was reported as the most useful item in the resource kit. According to the authors, "Such resources can potentially help primary care providers in their delivery of effective treatment for such presentations. There may also be particular relevance for rural and remote practice, where access to dental services can be more limited." CITATION: Skapetis, T., Gerzina, T.M., & Cameron, W. (2013). Effectiveness of a brief educational workshop intervention among primary care providers at 6 months: Uptake of dental emergency supporting resources. *The International Journal of Rural and Remote Health Research Education, Practice and Policy*, 13, 2286. ◆

Did You Know?

- Oral health was ranked as the fifth most important priority condition for Rural Healthy People 2010 and is a priority health topic for Healthy People 2020.
- People who have the least access to preventive services and dental treatment have greater rates of oral diseases.
- Oral health, particularly gum disease, can be linked to several chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. In pregnant women, gum disease is also associated with premature births and low birth weight.
- In 2010, adults (25+ years) with some college education had the highest percentage of dental visits within the past 12 months (55.6%) as compared to 15.8% for those with less than a high school education. ◆



The Impact of New Dental Schools on the Rural Dentist Workforce

Oral health is essential to overall health and the need for oral health care services in rural areas is growing. To address this issue, policymakers in Virginia proposed to open a new dental school in a rural region to increase the size of the dentist workforce and improve residents' oral health outcomes. To investigate the benefits of this potential solution, researchers created a policy simulation to forecast the number of graduates expected to remain in the rural region following graduation, as well as the number of patients treated in the dental school clinic. Using plausible assumptions, various scenarios were run with results varying with education pipeline and clinical models (ex. traditional dental school clinic, patient-centered clinic, community-based clinic). The education pipeline component of the simulation revealed wide variations in number of dentists who could be expected to remain in the region with a low of three to a high of nine dentists from 2020 to 2053. Two contributing factors that limit the number of dental graduates to remain in the region include high tuition costs and a shortage of academically prepared applicants who come from the region. The number of patients served, as determined by the clinical model component of the simulation, ranged from 7,727 for the traditional clinic model to 17,017 under the community-based model. Despite the fact that a new dental school would increase the dentist workforce and utilization rates, it would still leave the region below US and statewide benchmarks. CITATION: Wanchek, T.N., & Rephann, T.J. (2013). Effects of a proposed rural dental school on regional dental workforce and access to care. *The International Journal of Rural and Remote Health Research Education, Practice and Policy*, 13, 2366. ◆

