Dental Treatment Uncool?

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By Cornelia Birr

Teens are reluctant to go to the dentist even if these visits are free because dental care is viewed as uncool, recent research from the University of Otago, New Zealand, has found. The study involved 140 pupils from 14 schools, training centres or agencies. Although kids were aware of what good oral health required (teeth brushing, etc.), they failed to make use of the free care.

New Strategies for Promoting Oral Health for All

The future of clinical dentists lies in fewer procedures of higher quality, together with prevention. The role of dentists will be advising patients about risks to dental health, investigating and controlling the risks, influencing the behaviour of patients, diagnosing oral and dental diseases, providing high-quality dental care, administration of a dental team of auxiliaries. A public health approach should include three main elements. A common risk factor approach to prevention, a population rather than a high-risk preventive strategy and an intersectoral health promotion multi-level strategy. In addition, an evidence-based approach should be mandatory.

Dentistry ‘Down Under’

It all depends upon where you live, of course. In Tasmania there are 25.5 dentists for every 100,000 citizens, but more than twice that number (59.5) for those in the Australian Capital Territory.

Researchers at National Taiwan University’s Department of Internal Medicine are among those seeking ways to fight cancer. In one study, led by Dr. Ann-Lai Cheng, seven patients with precursors to oral cancer were given large doses of turmeric and the effects tracked.

During Dr. Cheng’s study, the patients took 800 milligrams a day of turmeric for three months. The patient’s leukoplakia improved and only a few suffered from mild gastrointestinal distress due to the large doses. Previous studies have shown that turmeric is an antioxidant and can be used as an anti-inflammatory.

'Spicy' Cures for Cancer

As the seventh most common form of cancer in Taiwan, there are approximately 2,000 cases of oral cancer reported every year. Not surprisingly, 80% of those who die from oral cancer were betel nut users.

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