

Oral Health Care in Patients with Severe Mental Illness in Wyoming

PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT

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Introduction

- Individuals with Serious Mental Illnesses (SMI) have a shorter life expectancy (i.e., about 25-30 fewer years of life) than the general population.
- Death due to coronary heart disease (CHD) is the largest contributor to the increased mortality rate in this population.
- Oral health is particularly important because medical links have been found between CHD and poor oral health.
- Genetics, lifestyle and health habits, as well as medication side-effects have been associated with oral health.

Statement of the Problem

- Oral health is particularly important to people taking antipsychotic medications because these medications make them more vulnerable to tooth decay.
- Studies have found that patients with persistent SMI have a 61% chance of having suboptimal oral health care
- Oral health in people with SMI has only recently become a focus of research.

Objectives

The overall objective of this research is to address, from the patients' perspective, the state of their oral health, oral health care needs, barriers, and, if possible issues related to provider interactions.

Methods

Participants:

-A total of 10 men and 10 women will be invited to participate.

-In order to participate individuals must meet the following criteria:

- (1) over age 18
- (2) have a confirmed psychiatric diagnosis
- (3) not actively suicidal
- (4) receiving services at a community mental health center
- (5) able to provide informed consent.

Procedure:

- Individuals referred by their providers for a larger healthy lifestyle study will be informed about the interviews.
- If eligible, participants will be scheduled for a 90-minute meeting will be scheduled where patients typically receive their mental health care.
- The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed within one week of the interview.
- The audio-tape will be used to capture all verbal exchanges.
- Notes will also be taken during the interviews.
- Participants will receive \$10 for their participation.

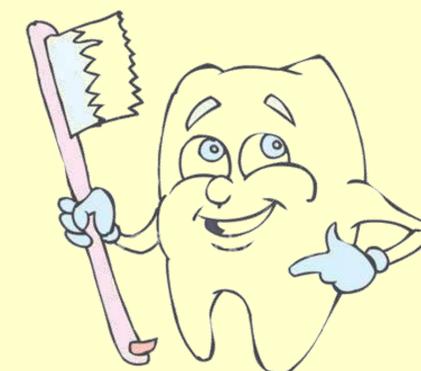


Data Analysis

- The interviews will be reviewed and transcribed, verbatim, within one week of the interview.
- A grounded-theory approach of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) will be used to code and analyze the data.
- Interviews and field notes will also be coded.
- Initial open coding will be done through analyzing transcripts word-by-word and segment-by-segment.
- Axial and selective coding will also be used to determine salient themes in the data.
- Conceptualizations about codes and thematic categories will be discussed with this student's mentor and a team of graduate students with experience in qualitative methods.

Importance of Study

Oral health is particularly important because medical links have been found between CHD and poor oral health. Oral health is also a good predictor of general health, quality of life, and level of self-esteem. In spite of these connections, oral health remains a low priority when treating SMI patients. (Matevosyan, 2009).



References

- Matevosyan, Naira Roland. (2009). Oral health of adults with serious mental illness: a review. *Community Mental Health Journal*.
- Glaser, B.G., & Stauss, A.L. (1967). *The Discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

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