

Improving Dental Care For Individuals With Special Needs

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Background

- The prevalence of oral diseases is extremely higher in people with disabilities. (Naseem et al, 2017).
- This is due to the many barriers they face when it comes to accessing dental care.
- Individuals with special needs have physical and financial barriers that prevent them from accessing routine care.
- The lack of accessibility to dental care for individuals with special needs is an ongoing problem (Alumran et al, 2018).
- A common barrier that prevents people with special needs from receiving appropriate oral healthcare is providers unwillingness to treat them. This is often due to the lack of education and training that dental professionals receive to care for this population. (da Rosa et al, 2020).
- Children with special needs have higher rates of poor oral hygiene, gingivitis, and periodontal disease than the general public.



Why is This Important

Dental care is the leading unmet health care need among children with special needs. (da Rosa et al, 2020).

Research has shown

- There is an access to care issue for special needs individuals.
- Shortage of Dental providers willing to provide care to this population
- Oral health is essential for overall health
- Individuals with special needs have a greater risk for dental diseases

Purpose

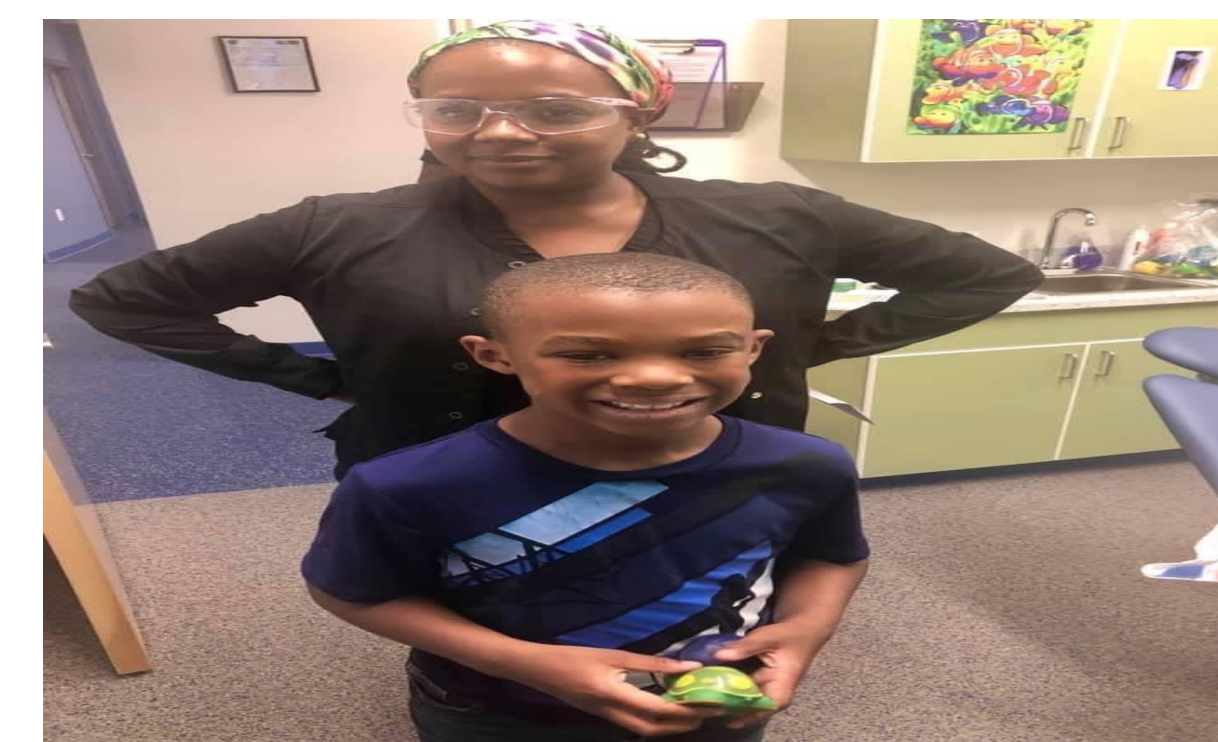
The purpose of this project is to provide information, support and training to dental professionals to help them feel confident and equipped to support this population. While bringing awareness to the disparities that individuals with special needs are facing when it comes to dental care. Having conversations with dental providers allows providers to see what needs to be done to help fix this problem. Having conversations with special needs parents/patients allows providers to see what they are doing right but to also let us know what needs to be improved

How

A didactic video to use as a tool for dental professionals to show how current dentists are successfully providing care to the disability population.

Demographics

For this project I interviewed a Pediatric dentist a General dentist, dental hygienist, dental Assistants and a front desk staff members to get a complete picture of how each staff member is involved when it comes to providing Care to special needs patients. Parents and care givers of individuals with special needs Were also interviewed.



Discussion Points

Each dental professional was asked

- To give a brief Bio
- Educational background
- Years of practice
- What type of work setting they currently practicing in
- Why its important to them to treat this population
- Techniques they use to provide adequate care
- Why do they think some providers are reluctant to treat this population
- What would you say to your colleagues to help encourage them to provide care to this underserved population

Parents/caregivers were asked:

- Childs special need/disability , age
- Experience with dental care
- What if any disparities did they face
- What worked for them
- How satisfied are they with the care they received

Recommendations

- Make conscious and intentional efforts to provide equitable treatment for all.
- Research why the disconnect is from residency to private practice
- Ensure that dental providers continue to provided care for special needs patients after residency

Conclusions

All individuals with special needs deserve to have equal access to dental care and be able to receive high- quality treatment that focuses on patient –centered care. With awareness, education and targeted training Dental care for this population would improve.

I challenge all dental professionals to join advocacy efforts and committees to create macro level changes. In order to make a Difference change will have to occur.



Bibliography

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