

Pediatric Dentistry and Behavioral Health Partnership: Creating Better Dental Experiences for the Patient, Caregiver, and Provider

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Introduction

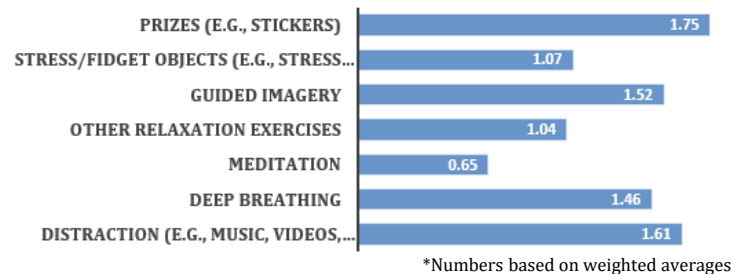
- An important behavioral health issue in pediatric dentistry is management of children's distress and disruptions
- Up to 20-25% of all children exhibit disruptive problems at the dental clinic (Raadal, Milgrom, & Weinstein, 1995; Brill, 2000)
- Disruption and distress increase with more invasive dental interventions; there is a high degree of perceived unpleasantness with going to the dentist (Brill, 2000)
- **Current study:**
 - Assess the needs of the dental practice (i.e., resources/interventions)
 - Create a plan to introduce interventions and train providers on how to utilize strategies in order to address children's distress and disruptions
 - Revise intake materials to gain more information regarding children's distress and mental health before treatment

Methods

- Location: Eastman Dental School
- Review of needs assessment completed prior year
- Literature review on interventions used by other practices
- Meetings and shadowing with providers in pediatric dentistry
- 11-item, Likert-scale and open answer survey distributed to attendings, residents, social workers, dental assistants, hygienists (N = 30)
- Analyses: descriptive statistics on survey

Results

Current Provider Use of Interventions



Outcomes

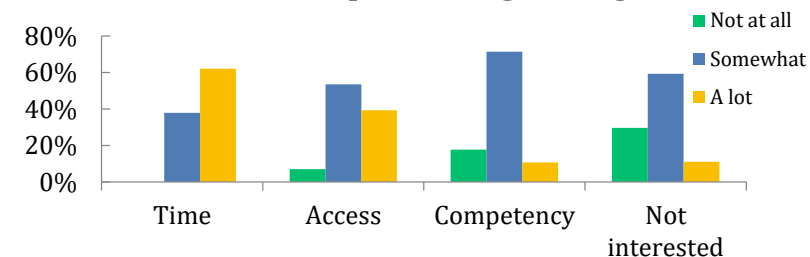
- Interventions Menu (see below): Dental providers would provide the menu to children to decide on what therapeutic interventions they would like to use during a dental visit
- Compilation of materials to be made available to all providers with easy access at different locations in the practice (e.g., interventions menu, relaxation/breathing scripts)
- Creation of itemized order form for items (e.g., stress balls, coloring pages, headphones for music, slime) to help with dental anxiety during treatment based on needs assessment results



Sample Relaxation Script:

Pretend you are squeezing a whole lemon in your left hand. Squeeze it hard. Try to squeeze all the juice out. Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Now drop the lemon and relax. See how much better your hand and arm feel when they are relaxed. Repeat with other hand.

Barriers to Implementing Strategies



Discussion

- Providers are interested in intervention strategies and ways to help reduce distress and disruption with children with dental anxiety
- However, two of the main barriers to implementing more strategies are time and access
- Strategies to address barriers including training providers to implement interventions were developed; however COVID-19 complications delayed implementation
- Providers and behavioral health partners need to make a plan to support the longevity of these interventions

Future Directions

- Implement plan for training providers in using strategies to address patient distress
- Revise intake form based on survey results

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