Understanding Oral-Systemic Health and Culture:
Bringing It All Together

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Authors

Maria C. Dolce, PhD, RN, CNE
   Associate Professor, School of Nursing
   Executive Director, Interprofessional Oral Health

Pamela Ring, JD, MPA
   Project Manager

Ashwini Ranade, BDS, MPH, Student, PhD Population Health
Kathryn Robinson, MHA/Ed, BSN, Student, PhD Nursing
Chardai Lyde, Student, BS Health Sciences
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Innovations in Interprofessional Oral Health

• Technology
• Instruction
• Practice
• Service
Purpose

➢ Describe the experiences of allied health students collaborating with dental students and faculty in a community outreach program to better understand the oral-systemic health needs of a local American Indian population.
Background

- The U.S. Surgeon General referred to the mouth as a mirror reflecting health and disease occurring in the body\textsuperscript{[1]}.

- The consequences of oral diseases are significant and adversely impact general health and well-being across the life cycle\textsuperscript{[1]}.

- Significant oral health inequities persist for vulnerable and underserved populations, particularly American Indians (AI)\textsuperscript{[2]}.

- AI face barriers to achieving optimal oral health based on a complex array of geographic, economic, and cultural issues which are distinct to their population\textsuperscript{[3]}.
Background

- Culture is a significant determinant of health [4].

- Leverage culture to address health inequalities [4].

- Every program should be tailored to the local community because every community is different [4].

- Understanding the barriers is the first step to addressing oral health inequities and the important connection between oral health and overall health [4].
Interprofessional Collaboration
Community Engagement
Student Perspectives

“There was so much that we learned from the stories of the community members and through our own interesting discussions.”
-Pharmacy Student

“The spectrum of community members and cultural novelties we were exposed to were incredible.”
-Behavioral Health Student

“In order to help people, we need to get to know them. This trip was less focused on education and promoting our agenda, and instead focused on increasing positive interactions with the tribe.”
-Nursing Student
Conclusion

- Bringing together students and faculty across health professions to engage in community outreach is an effective interprofessional education strategy to promote cultural humility in improving oral-systemic health for vulnerable and underserved individuals, communities, and populations.
Acknowledgement

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Dean, Bouvé College of Health Sciences

Harvard School of Dental Medicine Students

Bouvé College of Health Sciences Students
Smiles for Life is the nation's only comprehensive oral health curriculum. Developed by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Group on Oral Health and now in its third edition, this curriculum is designed to enhance the role of primary care clinicians in the promotion of oral health for all age groups through the development and dissemination of high-quality educational resources.

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**For Educators**

The curriculum is available in a presentation format easily implemented in an academic setting. Included is a comprehensive set of educational objectives based on the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) competencies, test questions, resources for further learning, oral health web links, an implementation guide, and detailed outlines of the modules.
References


Innovations in Interprofessional Oral Health has been established at Northeastern University, Bouvé College of Health Sciences as a resource center to advance innovations in research, education and practice for optimal oral health.

http://www.northeastern.edu/oralhealth
Contact Information

Dr. Maria C. Dolce
Associate Professor
School of Nursing
m.dolce@neu.edu

Ashwini Ranade
PhD Student, Population Health
a.ranade@neu.edu

Kathryn Robinson
PhD Student, Nursing
k.robinson@neu.edu