Bridging Community Dental Practitioners to Research: The South Texas Oral Health Network (STOHN)

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Did you know that dental sealants can stop the progression of occlusal caries lesions in adults (1)? Is salivary testing a validated tool for caries risk assessment (2)? How important is antibiotic therapy to children with otitis media (3)? How common is adult-onset asthma (4)? These are all examples of important areas of research whose foundations have developed through practice-based research networks (PBRNs). PBRNs have

Abstract

Dental practice-based research networks (PBRNs) are a consortia of practices committed to supporting research projects aimed at improving clinical care. Participation in a PBRN provides investigative experience for dental practitioners as they contribute to the evidence base for dental practice, and it returns the information gained from the network back to the practices with the goal of improving the quality of care. The South Texas Oral Health Network (STOHN), affiliated with the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, was established through the Clinical Translational Science Award funded by the National Institutes of Health in May 2008. STOHN provides a centralized university-based infrastructure, a link to research resources, and an engine to move projects forward. This infrastructure allows dental practitioners and faculty to easily participate actively in research leading to collaborative community partnerships. STOHN’s 31 members are very committed to participating in research activities and have contributed to research at each stage of its development. This article outlines an approach to building a research network, and it provides examples of clinical achievements from the dental practice-based research.

KEY WORDS:
Practice-based research network; dentistry; dental practitioners; clinical practice; clinical research

Inflammation is recognized as the major underlying contributor to a number of chronic diseases, amongst them periodontitis and cardiovascular diseases. The relationship between these diseases is explored and commented on in this question-and-answer session between Ken Kornman, D.D.S., Ph.D., the editor of the Journal of Periodontology and David Richards, D.D.S., Ph.D., a former student of Dr. Kornman’s. Practical suggestions and guidelines for the dentist are also examined.

Dr. Richards has been in private practice in San Diego since 1997 when he left the University of California, San Francisco, School of Dentistry, as an associate professor.
Necrotizing Ulcerative Gingivitis: A Discussion of Four Dissimilar Presentations

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Abstract

Background
Necrotizing ulcerative gingivitis (NUG) is a periodontal disease characterized by pain, bleeding, and necrosis of interdental papillae. This series details treatment of four cases, followed by a discussion of the disease.

Case description
Four patients presented to four practitioners for treatment of severe gingival pain, each eventually being diagnosed with NUG. All patients in this series were successfully treated using accepted protocols, and though each was different with regard to presenting signs and symptoms, all responded similarly to treatment. Similar to the patients described in this series, NUG cases in general can present with varying degrees of involvement from barely-noticeable to starkly severe.

Clinical implications
The most severe cases of NUG are often more destructive in appearance than those most commonly seen in textbooks, while in the mildest cases the appearance can almost be mistaken for health.