



Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice Behaviour of Midwives Concerning Periodontal Health of Pregnant Patients

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Abstract:

Maternal gum disease is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth and low birthweight. This study aims to evaluate the knowledge, attitudes and practice behaviour of Australian midwives regarding the periodontal health of pregnant women to inform interprofessional antenatal care. This was an observational, cross-sectional study. We circulated an online questionnaire to Australian midwives from August 2018 to February 2019. Key outcome variables were knowledge, attitudes, and practice behaviours related to oral health. Key predictor variables were years of practice, practice location, and dental history. We summarized responses with frequency tables and assigned tallied scores for analysis using non-parametric statistical tests. 100 responses were analysed, including from rural ($n = 23$) and urban ($n = 77$) midwives. Eighty percent of midwives agreed that maternal dental care can positively affect pregnancy outcomes. Fluoridated toothpaste use (19.1%) was incorrectly answered to prevent gum disease more often than psychological stress control (7.9%), a correct answer. Rural midwives demonstrated a significantly higher knowledge score ($p = 0.001$) and significantly more positive practice behaviours towards oral health ($p = 0.014$) than urban midwives. Australian midwives have positive attitudes towards antenatal oral health but misunderstand gum disease aetiology and prevention. This study highlights areas to improve interprofessional education for optimal oral health and pregnancy outcomes.

Biography:

Jennifer Nguyen is a general dentist trained at the University of Sydney, and is currently a General Practice Resident in hospital dentistry at the University of British Columbia, Canada. She is interested in the role of interprofessional collaboration to improve patient outcomes, and is passionate about improving equitable access to health care. Jennifer is also a North American Coordinating Committee Fellow for the international non-profit Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM), addressing issues in health policy and access to medicines.



Publication of speakers:

- Jennifer Gia-linh Nguyen et al ; Australian midwives and provision of nutrition education during pregnancy: A cross sectional survey of nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and confidence, 2016
- Jennifer Gia-linh Nguyen et al ; Current evidence on antenatal care provision for women with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review, 2016
- Jennifer Gia-linh Nguyen et al ; What do antenatal care providers understand and do about oral health care during pregnancy: a cross-sectional survey in New South Wales, Australia, 2016
- Jennifer Gia-linh Nguyen et al ; How effectively do midwives manage the care of obese pregnant women? A cross-sectional survey of Australian midwives, 2013
- Jennifer Gia-linh Nguyen et al ; Promoting oral health during pregnancy: current evidence and implications for Australian midwives, 2010

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