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Prevention, practicality and profitability of oral health promotion in primary care practice

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Oral health is a major public health issue affecting today's children and families with dental caries continuing to be the most common chronic childhood disease. The major issue affecting pediatric oral health outcomes continues to be the shortage of pediatric dental service providers. The use of primary care providers as a first line defense in children's oral health is a creative approach that can provide oral assessment, care and education to this vulnerable population. These frequent contacts at a young age also allow for referral to appropriate dental services that are willing and able to see children and care for their dental needs. Financial incentives for providing oral health care has helped to slowly increase the number of states and practices willing to include early oral health interventions. Therefore, based on the limited time required to perform standard oral health care visits, economic benefits to the practice, and satisfaction of impacting pediatric oral health outcomes, primary care providers should be motivated to integrate these programs into their practice.

Biography

Deborah Mattheus has completed her PhD in Nursing from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Her doctoral research focused on the efficacy of oral health promotion programs in primary care practice. She currently works at the University of Florida in Pediatric Immunology, Rheumatology and Infectious Disease as well as teaching on-line for the University of Hawaii at Hilo in their Doctoral Nursing Program and on-line for the University of Phoenix.

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