

Confident Care, Healthier Smiles: Improving Spanish-Language Oral Health Education

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Objectives: With a rapidly growing Hispanic population, dental (DDS) and dental hygiene (DH) student preparation in dental Spanish is crucial. Dental Spanish resources for treatment and delivery of oral hygiene instructions (OHI) to Spanish-speaking patients (SSPs) are lacking. The purpose of this study was to determine confidence among student providers when treating and delivering OHI to SSPs.

Methods: Pre-post surveys were administered to DDS and DH students at the UNC Adams School of Dentistry (ASOD) around a Spanish-language OHI lesson. Lesson structure included a pre-post knowledge assessment and presentation on terminology. Surveys collected demographics, experience with SSPs, confidence with treating SSPs, and willingness to utilize dental Spanish. Survey question types included multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended. Descriptive statistics, multivariate analysis and thematic analysis were used for data analysis.

Results: Survey participants included 42 matched survey respondents including DDS and DH students. The majority (73.81%) of participants reported treating at least one SSP per semester. Confidence with using dental terminology with SSPs and providing OHI to SSPs had a significant change from pre- to post-survey with a general increase in both categories. Pre-post knowledge assessments on basic OHI terminology completed included 60 matched assessments with a significant increase from an average score of 90% to 98%.

Conclusion: DDS and DH students expressed an overall increase in knowledge on basic dental Spanish OHI terminology and confidence with using dental Spanish terminology following the lesson. Participants suggested that students at ASOD would benefit from continued dental Spanish lessons.

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