

Citation: BLAKE H., BRADY LR., LEIGHTON PA., YOUNIS F., DEERY C., DAWETT B. Does oral health knowledge and behaviour improve following brief dental care professional (DCP) delivered educational intervention in schools?
In: Proceedings of the UK Society for Behavioural Medicine, 7th Annual Scientific Meeting, Stirling, 13-14 December 2011.

Poster Title: Does oral health knowledge and behaviour improve following brief dental care professional (DCP) delivered educational intervention in schools?

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Background: Poor oral health in childhood can result in significant problems later in life. Individual oral health education during clinical encounters has been shown to be largely ineffective and community-delivered approaches to oral health education are warranted.

Objectives: To assess change in oral health care knowledge and oral health behaviours in children following group oral health education delivered in the school setting by a dental care professional.

Methods: 150 children (10-11 years) received a 60-minute classroom-based interactive educational session. All children completed oral health knowledge questionnaire and self-reported oral health behaviours before, immediately after and 6 weeks following intervention.

Results: Children's dental knowledge significantly improved following intervention ($F(2, 292) = 49.92, p < 0.001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.26$), with improvement evident at immediate follow-up ($t(147) = -8.01, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.31$) and maintained 6 weeks later ($t(148) = -8.91, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.35$). Significantly more children used dental floss 6 weeks after the intervention compared with baseline ($Z = -3.99, p < 0.001$). No significant differences were detected in tooth brushing or dietary behaviours.

Conclusions: Community preventative oral health education can generate short-term improvements in children's knowledge of oral health and aspects of oral hygiene behaviour.