

Tobacco use and oral health: An interprofessional and community engaged collaboration to deepen understanding of the effects of tobacco

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Community members and policy makers

ABSTRACT: Background/Purpose: One of the major causes of oral cancer and potentially malignant disorders is tobacco use, a modifiable risk factor (Jin et al., 2016). In Klamath County, tobacco use is one of the deciding factors that place the population in the poor health ranking of 36 out of 36 counties in the state of Oregon in 2016 (County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2017).

Objective: Community-based assessments were conducted to investigate the knowledge level of Klamath County residents regarding the effects of tobacco use on oral health.

Methods: Students collected data through interprofessional collaboration, windshield surveys, tobacco use surveys, focus groups ranging from middle school to college level, community assessments, semi-structured interviews, and key informant interviews.

Findings: Analysis of data shows a fair amount of knowledge, about tobacco and the effects of tobacco in general, within all age groups surveyed; however, the knowledge level related to the effects of tobacco use on oral health was deficient.

Conclusion: Improving the health of the community can be achieved by strengthening the community's knowledge about the effects of tobacco, improving smoking cessation programs, and implementing brief oral health screenings during regular health visits with primary care providers.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Describe the knowledge of the population within a rural community regarding tobacco use and oral health.
- Identify assets and barriers to tobacco cessation.
- Describe interventions to promote oral health and tobacco cessation.

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