

Child and adolescent perceptions of oral health: Life course perspectives

March 19 2016

Today at the 45th Annual Meeting & Exhibition of the American Association for Dental Research, researcher Carl Maida, University of California, Los Angeles, USA, will present a study titled "Child and Adolescent Perceptions of Oral Health: Life Course Perspectives." The AADR Annual Meeting is being held in conjunction with the 40th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Dental Research.

To elicit perceptions of [oral health](#) among youth as an initial step in the development of oral health item banks for the Patient-Reported Oral Health Outcomes Measurement Information System project, researchers conducted four English-language focus groups: two with children, 8-12 years old (n=14; 9 boys, 5 girls) and two with adolescents, 13-17 years old (n=15; 10 girls, 5 boys) from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Families with dental homes located in different types of practices serving the Los Angeles area were recruited to participate in the focus groups. Transcripts from audiotapes of sessions were analyzed using NVivo. Word frequencies were used to identify potentially important issues for these children and adolescents. Content analysis, including a thematic and narrative analysis, was used to uncover important themes.

The researchers identified three unique themes that the youth associated with their oral health status: 1) understanding the value of maintaining good oral health over the life course, with respect to longevity and quality of life in their adult years; 2) positive associations between maintaining good oral health and interpersonal relationships at school,

and dating, for older youth; and 3) knowledge of the benefits of orthodontic treatment to appearance and positive self-image, along with strong views about the discomfort of wearing braces. This study reinforces the importance of qualitative methods in the formative stage of oral health item development. The results provide valuable information about core domains for oral health to target in developing survey items for children and adolescents to be used by dentists, oral health researchers and policy makers for oral health screening, evaluation and management, program assessment and policy planning.

More information: This is a summary of oral presentation #1548, "Child and Adolescent Perceptions of Oral Health: Life Course Perspectives," which will be presented on Saturday, March 19, 2016, 8 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. at the Los Angeles Convention Center, room #405

Provided by International & American Associations for Dental Research

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