

How Can Oral Health Professionals Aid Eating Disorders?

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Research Question: The aim of this study was to perform a scoping review of the current state of scientific literature on the secondary prevention of eating disorders by oral health professionals.

BACKGROUND

Eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder are serious psychiatric illnesses that impact all body systems, including oral health. Papers that write about this link to oral health have been published for over 30 years. Overall, these papers have successfully identified and outlined the effect of eating disorders on oral health. More current research has focused on the implementation of training methods in order to properly educate the dental community of the secondary treatment of eating disorders.

DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The Global Mental Health Programs Consortium is based at Columbia University. It was founded by Dr. Kathleen Pike in 2012 and transitioned to a formalized consortium of programs in 2018. Their mission is to promote mental health worldwide through innovative advocacy, research, and training. Through this, the overall organization has striven to strip down the stigma that is associated with mental health and tackle mental health as a global that affects everyone individually or those who matter most to us.



METHODS

These papers were extracted from a previously conducted search for a scoping review of the same topic. PubMed and Embase were used to find literature for eating disorders and oral health that was published after the year 2000.

RESULTS

9 papers related to **Oral Health Care Professionals'** knowledge and confidence related to eating disorders and secondary prevention

Categorization of Papers	Key Findings
5 papers shared the primary oral health conditions associated with eating disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parotid Gland Hypertrophy - Enamel Erosion - Chronic Dry Mouth - Hot and Cold Sensitivity
4 papers investigated effective educational interventions	<p>Increases in Oral Health Care Professionals'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-efficacy - Knowledge of oral manifestations - Treatment - Attitudes Towards Secondary Treatment

RESULTS, Continued

- A study explored dentists' attitudes and knowledge about treating patients with eating disorders. They found that over **86% of respondents (n=258) felt they required additional training in clinical management of patients with eating disorders.**
- Another study surveying dentists on their knowledge and confidence on managing patients with eating disorders found that **most dentists (76%) expressed the need for more education in clinical management of these patients**

MAIN FINDINGS

The field of dentistry has long been aware of the potential for irreversible oral health damage from eating disorders; however, little has been done to address this through the formal education of students or professionals.

DISCUSSION

Given the longstanding knowledge in the oral health field of the harms associated with eating disorders, and the development of effective educational interventions, the next step is to put these educational interventions into practice. Potential ways to integrate this education include **1) establishing a standardized curriculum for dental students that includes training in eating disorders with the inclusion of this content in the National Board Dental Exam, and 2) providing an e-curriculum module that includes continuing education credits for practicing clinicians.**

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