The Center for Integration of Primary Care and Oral Health (CIPCOH) serves as a national resource for systems-level research on oral health integration into primary care training with special emphasis on teaching enhancements for primary care providers to deliver high quality, cost-effective, patient-centered care that promotes oral health, addresses oral health disparities and meets the unique needs of all communities.

CIPCOH will contribute to the improvement of primary care practice and patient outcomes through:

- Conducting systems-level research on primary care training
- Disseminating information, best practices, and resources
- Developing community of practice plans that mobilize stakeholders to integrate oral health into primary care training and delivery

Study Objectives

National initiatives in the U.S. have encouraged oral health training for primary care and other non-dental providers for over two decades. Our survey assesses progress of health schools, programs, and residencies of this important health topic.

Study Design/Setting

Thirteen surveys were electronically administered nationally across primary care specialty programs and schools: residency programs for Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Geriatric Fellowship, Pediatrics, Med-Peds, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Allopathic Medical Schools, Osteopathic Medical Schools, Physician Assistant (PA) programs, Certified Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioner disciplines (including Family NP, Pediatric NP, Geriatric NP).

Outcome Measures

A 19-question web-based survey covered multiple topics related to oral health training including time allotted to training, oral health topics, teaching by dental professionals, barriers and facilitators to inclusion of oral health, evaluation strategies, satisfaction with learner and graduate competence in oral health, etc. Additional questions assessed program demographics including location, size of community, number of learners, number of years as a training site, etc. Data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

Policy Implications

- Programs with oral health champions have more oral health teaching, competency, and interprofessional collaboration.
- While some programs like Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants have adequate hours and strong program director satisfaction as well as quality scores, others need dramatic improvement.
- Funding should be focused on improving those health professions which are lagging in oral health teaching and competency.

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