Welcome to the biannual STOHN newsletter!

STOHN’S MANY SUCCESSES

2010 was a very busy year for us at STOHN. We were very productive not just with execution of research protocols, but also with recruiting new members, conducting convocations, and generating new research topics and publications.

- The 1st annual STOHN Convocation was held on March 30th, 2010. Sixteen community clinicians and 15 investigators attended. Bisphosphonate-associated Osteonecrosis of the Jaw (BONJ) was identified as the top research priority of the STOHN members.

- STOHN’s pilot study on undiagnosed diabetes in the dental office was published in the July edition of Dentista y Paciente magazine, a Mexican publication intended for dentists and their patients. The article was published in English and Spanish.

- STOHN’s new, easier-to-remember website (http://stohn.uthscsa.edu) was launched in September. You can view projects, pictures, and complete your required online human research training.

- The 2nd annual PBRN Convocation was held on October 15 & 16th, 2010. Over 200 community clinicians and investigators from all disciplines attended. Highlights of STOHN session include:
  - James Bone was awarded the “STAR of STOHN” for outstanding in recruitment for the year 2010.
  - John Cornell presented on the undiagnosed diabetes study during the network update session (see page 2).
  - James Mazock presented on the process of developing and launching the BONJ study (see page 2 & 3).
  - Joshua Austin presented on “Functional, Fashionable, and ‘Fordable Office Interiors.”
  - Dentista y Paciente magazine interviewed STOHN Practice Facilitator April Biasiolli; her interview was published in the December issue.
Ongoing Study:
Prevalence of Undiagnosed Diabetes Among Patients in Community-Based Dental Practices (Phase II)

Purpose: Examine the potential for dental practices to offer undiagnosed diabetes patients a unique portal into medical care beyond physician-centered settings.

Hypotheses: Dental offices provide a unique point of care for testing and disease identification; and patients presenting to dental offices have a limited awareness of their diabetic condition and susceptibility.

Pilot Data: Pilot data showed that 36% (N=66) of patients were at high risk for Type 2 diabetes, but only 14% (N=26) had been diagnosed. Of the high-risk patients, 64% (N=42) were women and 49% (N=32) were Hispanic. 84% (N=53) of these patients were accessing health care services regularly; hence, the prevalence of undiagnosed patients at high risk of Type 2 diabetes is 31.1% despite regular medical care.

Next Steps: This study has been chosen by the Network as an entry point project for new members. The objective of this study is to extend the initial survey to include a broader population within the San Antonio area and to focus more precisely on the potential for dental offices to serve as an alternate medical access point for previously undiagnosed diabetes patients. An IRB-approved survey, revised from the pilot study and available in English and Spanish, will be used to assess levels of undiagnosed diabetes. STOHN plans to enroll 17 new practitioners across a geographic and socioeconomic distribution over the next year to participate in the study.

New Study:
Dental Practitioners’ Knowledge and Perceptions of BONJ

Purpose: To assess practicing dentists’ perceptions, attitudes and knowledge towards BONJ and treatment recommendations regarding the management of patients with a history of bisphosphonate therapy utilizing the South Texas Oral Health Network.

Hypotheses: Dentists’ perceptions, attitudes and knowledge about the prevalence of bisphosphonate therapy and associated risks in their patient populations may compromise therapeutic options provided to their patients. Furthermore, educational interventions clarifying misunderstandings of the prevalence of therapy and risks associated with bisphosphonate therapy will alter the therapeutic options provided to patients.

Method: STOHN members, SADDS members & UTHSCSA Dental School faculty members are being recruited to complete a 38-question online survey.

Timeline: Data collection will be completed by the end of March; preliminary data analysis will be conducted on an ongoing basis; and results will be disseminated in the next STOHN newsletter.

Next Steps: STOHN will seek federal funding to develop educational materials if the survey indicates such a need.

Future Study:
Dissemination of the Tobacco Cessation Toolkits

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to disseminate the tobacco cessation toolkit that was developed from the focus group study. The toolkit was designed keeping in mind the dentists’ and doctors’ real-life concerns and requests.

Methods: The toolkit will be distributed to the clinics that had participated in the focus group study. The clinics will also be evaluated by a 6 month follow-up for the ease and usefulness of toolkit.
STOHN is Recruiting!

STOHN has completed video interviews with Network members for a recruitment video that will be released in early next year. If you have colleagues interested in joining the network, please direct them to the information below.

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How are STOHN Studies Developed?

The STOHN study “Dental Practitioners’ Knowledge and Attitudes on BONJ,” discussed on page 2, exemplifies the process for practice-based research:

1. The topic, along with many others, was suggested by a member during the March 2010 convocation meeting. Members then had the opportunity to vote for their top four interests, and this topic received the most votes.

2. The STOHN staff then conducted a literature review to investigate what is already known about the topic and what is yet to be learned.

3. A research subcommittee, composed of STOHN staff, STOHN members, and UTHSCSA faculty was convened to develop research ideas. The committee decided on a survey of knowledge and attitudes because there is little research on this topic and because it is well-suited to the current capabilities of the network.

4. The committee went through several drafts of the research proposal and survey.

5. The STOHN staff obtained human subjects research approval from the UTHSCSA Institutional Review Board (IRB).

6. The survey is currently being administered.

7. UTHSCSA staff will provide statistical support to analyze the data.

8. STOHN will seek federal funding to develop educational materials if the data indicates such a need.

Did You Know?

Asking the right research question is a difficult skill to learn, yet it is fundamental to the evidence-based decision-making process. This process almost always begins with a patient question or problem. A "well-built" research question should include four parts, referred to as PICO, that identify the patient Problem or Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome.


STOHN Research Foci

Diabetes & Oral Health
Is the dental office a good place to screen for diabetes?

Bisphosphonates and Wound Healing
What do dentists and patients know about the potential risks?

Tobacco Cessation
How can dentists help patients to quit?