

Introduction

Smokeless tobacco (SLT) use is a rising public health threat that must be addressed nationally and globally. This health behavior is associated with oral cancer, periodontitis, and precancerous lesions such as leukoplakia. Awareness of its harmful effects must increase within populations with high prevalence of SLT use.

The purpose of this study is to survey dentists and dental hygienists in our focus population to determine their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of SLT use. This information will help create SLT cessation programs.

Material and Methods

This study was funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health.

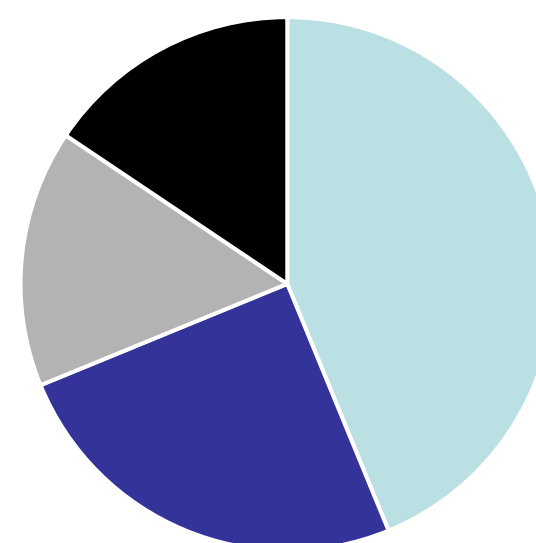
- A 34-question survey was completed by 61 dental professionals within the South Texas Oral Health Network (STOHN).
- This questionnaire gathered information about their demographics, attitudes, and beliefs about SLT products.
- STOHN dental practitioners were all sent an email invitation to participate in the study.
- Practitioners were compensated \$20 following the completion of the survey.



Results

1. n = 61 dental professionals completed the survey, 72% were dentists while 28% were dental hygienists.
2. Nearly half (43.8%) reported having a *moderate* amount of knowledge about SLT while others, *a lot* (25%), an *extensive amount* (15.6%), and *a little* (15.6%).
3. Regarding their skills, 45.3% and 9.4% *strongly agreed* and *agreed* they can conduct SLT cessation counseling with their patients.
4. Most (93.7%) reported their knowledge of SLT's carcinogenic ingredients and 84.1% disagreed that SLT is a safer alternative compared to smoking.
5. Only 13.1% *always* assist their patients in developing a "plan" to quit, 13.1% *always* arrange referrals for appropriate services, 8.2% *always* provide resources for cessation, and 4.9% *always* provide nicotine replacement products.
6. 41% reported they *disagree* that most patients who use smokeless tobacco want cessation counseling.
7. 47.5% were willing to improve how they provide cessation services
8. 26.2% *strongly agreed* and 32.8% *agreed* that they feel so strongly that SLT cessation is critical to their patients' health they will assist them without regard to any barriers

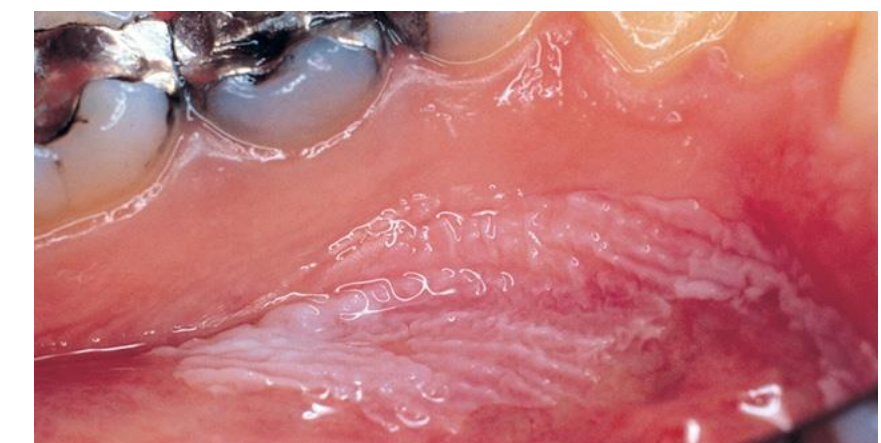
Amount of Knowledge about SLT



■ Moderate 43.8% ■ A lot 25% ■ Extensive amount 15.6% ■ A little 15.6%

Conclusion

Smokeless tobacco use remains a public health threat that is understudied. This study data indicates a need for more SLT cessation program training and implementation. These SLT cessation programs can lead to a decrease in smoking behaviors which can improve overall health outcomes.



References

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