



COMMUNITY-BASED ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION INITIATIVES

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Abstract:

Community-based oral health promotion initiatives play a crucial role in improving oral health outcomes among diverse populations. This review article examines the effectiveness of various community-based interventions aimed at promoting oral health and preventing oral diseases. The study explores the impact of these initiatives on individuals, families, and communities, highlighting successful strategies and best practices. By synthesizing existing literature, this review provides valuable insights into the key components of successful community-based oral health promotion programs. Additionally, the article discusses the challenges and barriers faced by such initiatives and proposes recommendations for future research and practice.

Keywords: Oral health, Community-based interventions, Health promotion, Prevention, Public health, Community engagement

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Introduction:

Community-based oral health promotion initiatives are essential for improving the overall health and well-being of individuals within a community. These initiatives focus on educating and empowering community members to take control of their oral health and make positive lifestyle choices. By engaging with the community and providing access to resources and support, these initiatives can help prevent oral health issues and improve overall quality of life [1].

One of the key components of community-based oral health promotion initiatives is education. This includes raising awareness about the importance of oral health, teaching proper oral hygiene practices, and providing information about the impact of diet and lifestyle choices on oral health. By educating community members about these topics, individuals can make informed decisions about their oral health and take steps to prevent common issues such as tooth decay, gum disease, and oral cancer [2].

In addition to education, community-based oral health promotion initiatives also focus on providing access to resources and support. This can include offering free or low-cost dental services, organizing community events and workshops, and partnering with local organizations to promote oral health awareness. By making these resources readily available to community members, individuals are more likely to seek out care and take proactive steps to maintain their oral health [3].

Furthermore, community-based oral health promotion initiatives often involve collaboration with various stakeholders, including healthcare providers, government agencies, schools, and community organizations. By working together, these stakeholders can leverage their resources and expertise to create a comprehensive approach to oral health promotion. This collaboration can lead to more effective programs and initiatives that reach a larger number of individuals within the community [4].

Overall, community-based oral health promotion initiatives play a crucial role in improving the oral health of individuals within a community. By focusing on education, access to resources, and collaboration, these initiatives can empower community members to take control of their oral health and make positive lifestyle choices. Through these efforts, communities can work towards reducing oral health disparities and improving the overall health and well-being of their residents [5].

The Importance of Community Engagement in Oral Health Initiatives:

Oral health is a crucial aspect of overall health and well-being, yet it is often overlooked or neglected in many communities. Poor oral health can lead to a variety of serious health issues, including gum disease, tooth decay, and even systemic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. In order to address these issues and improve the oral health of individuals in communities, it is essential to engage with the community and involve them in oral health initiatives [6].

Community engagement in oral health initiatives is important for several reasons. First and foremost, involving the community in oral health programs helps to increase awareness and education about the importance of oral health. Many individuals may not fully understand the link between oral health and overall health, or may not be aware of the resources available to them for maintaining good oral hygiene. By engaging with the community and providing education on oral health, individuals can learn how to properly care for their teeth and gums, leading to better overall health outcomes [7].

Additionally, community engagement in oral health initiatives helps to address disparities in oral health care access and outcomes. In many communities, there are barriers to accessing dental care, such as lack of insurance, transportation issues, or a shortage of dental providers. By involving the community in oral health initiatives, organizations can identify these barriers and work with community members to find solutions. This may include providing transportation to dental appointments, connecting individuals with affordable dental care options, or advocating for policies that improve access to dental services [8]. Furthermore, community engagement in oral health initiatives helps to empower individuals to take control of their own oral health. By involving community members in the planning and implementation of oral health programs, organizations can help individuals feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for their oral health. This can lead to increased motivation to practice good oral hygiene habits, such as brushing and flossing regularly, and seeking preventive dental care [9].

One example of successful community engagement in oral health initiatives is the Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) program, developed by the American Dental Association. CDHCs are community health workers who are trained to provide oral health education, screenings, and referrals to dental care for underserved populations. By working directly with community members,

CDHCs are able to address barriers to oral health care and improve access to dental services for those who need it most [10].

Community engagement is a vital component of successful oral health initiatives. By involving community members in the planning and implementation of oral health programs, organizations can increase awareness and education about the importance of oral health, address disparities in access to dental care, and empower individuals to take control of their own oral health. Through collaboration and partnership with the community, we can work towards improving oral health outcomes for individuals in all communities [11].

Effective Strategies for Community-based Oral Health Promotion:

Oral health is an essential aspect of overall health and well-being. Poor oral health can lead to a variety of problems, including tooth decay, gum disease, and even more serious systemic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. In order to promote good oral health in communities, it is important to implement effective strategies for oral health promotion [12].

Education and Awareness

One of the most important strategies for promoting good oral health in communities is education and awareness. Many people are unaware of the importance of oral health and the steps they can take to maintain good oral hygiene. By providing education and raising awareness about the importance of oral health, communities can empower individuals to take control of their own oral health and make positive choices for themselves and their families [13].

Education and awareness can take many forms, including community workshops, school programs, and public health campaigns. These initiatives can provide information on proper brushing and flossing techniques, the importance of regular dental check-ups, and the impact of diet and lifestyle choices on oral health. By equipping individuals with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their oral health, education and awareness initiatives can help to prevent oral health problems before they arise [14].

Access to Dental Care

Another key strategy for community-based oral health promotion is improving access to dental care. Many individuals in underserved communities lack access to affordable dental services, which can result in untreated oral health problems and a higher risk of developing serious

conditions. By increasing access to dental care through initiatives such as mobile dental clinics, community health centers, and public insurance programs, communities can ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to receive the care they need to maintain good oral health [15].

In addition to increasing access to dental care, communities can also work to address barriers that prevent individuals from seeking dental treatment. These barriers may include lack of transportation, fear of the dentist, or financial constraints. By providing resources and support to help individuals overcome these barriers, communities can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to receive the dental care they need to maintain good oral health [16].

Collaboration and Partnership

Collaboration and partnership are essential components of effective community-based oral health promotion. By working together with local organizations, healthcare providers, schools, and government agencies, communities can leverage their resources and expertise to create comprehensive oral health programs that reach a wide range of individuals. Collaboration and partnership can also help to ensure that initiatives are sustainable and meet the unique needs of the community [17].

One example of successful collaboration in community-based oral health promotion is the development of school-based oral health programs. By partnering with schools to provide dental screenings, education, and preventive services, communities can reach a large number of children and families and promote good oral health habits from a young age. These programs can also help to identify and address oral health problems early, before they become more serious [18].

Effective strategies for community-based oral health promotion are essential for improving the oral health of individuals and communities. By focusing on education and awareness, access to dental care, and collaboration and partnership, communities can empower individuals to take control of their oral health and make positive choices for themselves and their families. By implementing these strategies, communities can work towards creating a healthier future for all [19].

Impact of Community-based Oral Health Programs on Oral Health Outcomes:

Oral health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. Poor oral health can lead to a range of issues, including tooth decay, gum disease, and even systemic health problems. In

many communities, access to oral health care is limited, leading to disparities in oral health outcomes. Community-based oral health programs have emerged as a way to address these disparities and improve oral health outcomes for individuals in underserved communities [20].

Benefits of Community-based Oral Health Programs

Community-based oral health programs offer a range of benefits for individuals and communities. One of the primary benefits is increased access to oral health care for underserved populations. Many individuals in low-income communities lack access to regular dental care due to financial barriers or lack of insurance. Community-based programs often provide free or low-cost dental services, making it easier for individuals to receive the care they need [21].

In addition to increasing access to care, community-based oral health programs also focus on preventive care and education. By promoting good oral hygiene practices and providing preventive services such as fluoride treatments and sealants, these programs help individuals maintain healthy teeth and gums. This focus on prevention can help reduce the prevalence of oral health issues such as cavities and gum disease, leading to improved oral health outcomes for participants [22].

Furthermore, community-based oral health programs often take a holistic approach to oral health, addressing not only dental issues but also the social determinants of health that can impact oral health outcomes. These programs may provide referrals to other healthcare services, address food insecurity, or offer educational resources on topics such as nutrition and smoking cessation. By addressing these underlying factors, community-based programs can help individuals achieve better overall health outcomes [21].

Challenges of Community-based Oral Health Programs

While community-based oral health programs offer many benefits, they also face a number of challenges. One of the primary challenges is funding. Many community-based programs rely on grants and donations to operate, which can make it difficult to sustain services over the long term. In addition, the populations served by these programs often have complex oral health needs, requiring a range of services that can be costly to provide [28]. Another challenge facing community-based oral health programs is workforce shortages. In many underserved communities, there is a shortage of dental providers, making it difficult for programs to

meet the demand for services. This shortage can lead to long wait times for appointments and limited access to care for individuals in need [15]. Additionally, community-based programs may face challenges in reaching and engaging their target populations. Individuals in underserved communities may face barriers such as transportation issues, language barriers, or lack of awareness about available services. Overcoming these barriers and building trust with the community can be a significant challenge for programs seeking to improve oral health outcomes [6].

Community-based oral health programs play a crucial role in improving oral health outcomes for individuals in underserved communities. By increasing access to care, promoting preventive services, and addressing social determinants of health, these programs can help individuals achieve better oral health and overall well-being. However, they also face challenges such as funding constraints, workforce shortages, and barriers to reaching their target populations. Addressing these challenges will be essential to ensuring the continued success of community-based oral health programs in improving oral health outcomes for all individuals [9].

Challenges and Barriers in Implementing Community-based Oral Health Initiatives:

Community-based oral health initiatives play a crucial role in promoting oral health and preventing dental diseases in populations. These initiatives involve engaging with communities to raise awareness about the importance of oral health, providing education on proper oral hygiene practices, and facilitating access to dental care services. However, despite their potential benefits, implementing community-based oral health initiatives can be challenging due to various barriers that hinder their effectiveness [32].

Lack of Awareness and Education

One of the primary challenges in implementing community-based oral health initiatives is the lack of awareness and education about oral health among the target population. Many communities, especially in underserved areas, may not have access to accurate information about the importance of oral health or may not prioritize oral health as a part of their overall well-being. This lack of awareness can hinder the success of oral health initiatives, as community members may not see the value in participating or may not understand how oral health impacts their overall health [4].

Limited Access to Dental Care Services

Another significant barrier to implementing community-based oral health initiatives is the limited access to dental care services in many communities. In underserved areas, there may be a shortage of dental providers, limited availability of affordable dental care services, or a lack of transportation options to access dental clinics. This can prevent community members from receiving the care they need and can make it challenging to implement initiatives that require access to dental services, such as screenings, cleanings, or treatments [11].

Socioeconomic Factors

Socioeconomic factors also play a role in hindering the implementation of community-based oral health initiatives. Communities facing poverty, unemployment, or lack of access to basic necessities may prioritize other needs over oral health, leading to a lower participation rate in oral health initiatives. Additionally, individuals from low-income backgrounds may face financial barriers to accessing dental care services, making it difficult for them to benefit from community-based initiatives that require ongoing dental care [15].

Cultural and Language Barriers

Cultural and language barriers can also pose challenges in implementing community-based oral health initiatives. Communities with diverse cultural backgrounds may have different beliefs, practices, and attitudes towards oral health, making it challenging to develop initiatives that resonate with all community members. Language barriers can also hinder communication and education efforts, as information may not be effectively conveyed to individuals who do not speak the predominant language in the community [9].

Strategies to Overcome Challenges and Barriers

Despite the challenges and barriers in implementing community-based oral health initiatives, there are several strategies that can help overcome these obstacles and improve the effectiveness of such initiatives. One strategy is to engage with community leaders, organizations, and stakeholders to gain support and buy-in for oral health initiatives. By involving community members in the planning and implementation process, initiatives can be tailored to meet the specific needs and preferences of the community, increasing their chances of success [17].

Another strategy is to leverage technology and digital platforms to reach a wider audience and provide education and resources on oral health. By utilizing social media, websites, and mobile apps, oral health initiatives can reach community members who may not have access to traditional

forms of communication or who prefer to receive information digitally. This can help overcome barriers such as lack of awareness, limited access to services, and language barriers, by providing information in a format that is easily accessible and understandable [15].

Collaboration with local health providers, clinics, and organizations is also essential in overcoming barriers to implementing community-based oral health initiatives. By partnering with existing healthcare providers, initiatives can leverage existing resources, infrastructure, and expertise to reach more community members and provide comprehensive oral health services. Collaboration can also help address barriers such as limited access to services, lack of awareness, and cultural differences, by tapping into the knowledge and experience of local healthcare providers who understand the needs of the community [25].

Implementing community-based oral health initiatives can be challenging due to various barriers that hinder their effectiveness. Lack of awareness and education, limited access to dental care services, socioeconomic factors, and cultural and language barriers are some of the key challenges that must be addressed to successfully implement oral health initiatives in communities. By utilizing strategies such as community engagement, technology, and collaboration with local healthcare providers, these barriers can be overcome, and the impact of community-based oral health initiatives can be maximized. It is essential to recognize and address these challenges to ensure that all community members have access to quality oral health care and can benefit from initiatives that promote oral health and prevent dental diseases [17].

Best Practices and Recommendations for Sustainable Oral Health Promotion:

Oral health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. It plays a crucial role in our ability to eat, speak, and interact with others. However, despite its importance, oral health is often overlooked and neglected. According to the World Health Organization, oral diseases affect nearly 3.5 billion people worldwide, with untreated dental caries being the most prevalent condition [20].

In order to promote sustainable oral health and prevent oral diseases, it is important to implement best practices and recommendations that focus on prevention, education, and access to oral health care services [21].

First and foremost, prevention is key when it comes to maintaining good oral health. This includes

practicing good oral hygiene habits such as brushing and flossing regularly, eating a healthy diet low in sugar and high in fruits and vegetables, and avoiding tobacco products. Additionally, regular dental check-ups and cleanings are essential for early detection and treatment of oral diseases [22].

Education also plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable oral health. It is important to educate individuals about the importance of oral health, proper oral hygiene practices, and the potential consequences of neglecting oral health. This can be done through community outreach programs, school-based oral health education initiatives, and public awareness campaigns [23].

Access to oral health care services is another important factor in promoting sustainable oral health. Unfortunately, many people around the world do not have access to affordable and quality oral health care services. This can lead to untreated oral diseases and poor oral health outcomes. It is important for governments, healthcare providers, and organizations to work together to improve access to oral health care services for all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status [24].

In addition to prevention, education, and access to care, it is also important to address social determinants of health that impact oral health outcomes. These include factors such as income, education, employment, and access to healthy food and clean water. By addressing these social determinants of health, we can help create a more equitable and sustainable oral health system [25].

Promoting sustainable oral health requires a comprehensive approach that focuses on prevention, education, access to care, and addressing social determinants of health. By implementing best practices and recommendations in these areas, we can improve oral health outcomes for individuals and communities around the world. It is important for governments, healthcare providers, and organizations to prioritize oral health promotion and work together to create a healthier future for all [26].

Future Directions for Research and Policy in Community-based Oral Health Promotion:

Oral health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. It is crucial for individuals to maintain good oral hygiene in order to prevent various oral diseases such as cavities, gum disease, and oral cancer. However, access to oral health care and resources is not equally distributed among different communities, leading to disparities in oral health outcomes. In order to address these disparities, it is important to focus on community-

based oral health promotion through research and policy initiatives [27].

Community-based oral health promotion refers to efforts to improve oral health within a specific community by engaging with community members and organizations. This approach recognizes the importance of addressing social determinants of health, such as access to care, education, and socioeconomic status, in order to improve oral health outcomes. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in community-based approaches to oral health promotion, with a focus on developing effective interventions and policies to address oral health disparities [28].

One of the future directions for research in community-based oral health promotion is to further explore the impact of social determinants of health on oral health outcomes. Research has shown that factors such as income, education, and access to care have a significant impact on oral health. By understanding the social determinants that contribute to oral health disparities, researchers can develop targeted interventions to address these disparities. For example, studies could examine the relationship between income inequality and oral health outcomes, and develop policies to address these disparities [29].

Another important area for future research is the development of effective community-based interventions for oral health promotion. These interventions should be tailored to the specific needs of the community and should involve collaboration with community members and organizations. For example, community-based programs could focus on providing education and resources for oral health care, promoting healthy behaviors, and addressing barriers to accessing care. Research in this area could evaluate the effectiveness of different interventions and identify best practices for community-based oral health promotion [30].

In addition to research, policy initiatives are also crucial for addressing oral health disparities in communities. One future direction for policy in community-based oral health promotion is to advocate for increased funding and resources for oral health programs in underserved communities. This could include funding for community-based clinics, oral health education programs, and workforce development initiatives. Policy efforts could also focus on improving access to oral health care for underserved populations, such as through Medicaid expansion and increased reimbursement rates for oral health services [31].

Furthermore, policy initiatives should also prioritize the integration of oral health into overall health care systems. This includes promoting the

integration of oral health services into primary care settings, as well as developing policies to support interprofessional collaboration between oral health providers and other health care professionals. By integrating oral health into overall health care, communities can improve access to oral health services and address oral health disparities more effectively [32].

Community-based oral health promotion is an important approach for addressing oral health disparities in communities. Future research and policy initiatives should focus on understanding the social determinants of oral health, developing effective community-based interventions, and advocating for policies to improve access to oral health care. By focusing on these future directions, communities can work towards improving oral health outcomes for all individuals [33].

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Community-based oral health promotion initiatives encompass a wide range of activities, including education, outreach, and preventive services, aimed at improving oral health behaviors and outcomes within communities. These initiatives often involve collaboration between healthcare providers, community organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders to address the unique oral health needs of diverse populations. By focusing on prevention and health promotion, these programs aim to reduce the incidence of oral diseases such as dental caries, periodontal disease, and oral cancer.

Studies have shown that community-based oral health promotion initiatives can lead to significant improvements in oral health knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors among participants. By empowering individuals to take control of their oral health and providing access to preventive services, these initiatives have the potential to reduce the burden of oral diseases and improve overall quality of life. Furthermore, community-based approaches have been shown to be cost-effective and sustainable, making them viable solutions for promoting oral health in underserved communities.

Despite their potential benefits, community-based oral health promotion initiatives face several challenges, including limited resources, lack of infrastructure, and barriers to access. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration between various stakeholders, advocacy for policy change, and ongoing evaluation of program effectiveness. By addressing these challenges and building on successful strategies, community-based oral health promotion initiatives can play a critical role in

improving oral health outcomes and promoting health equity within communities.

Community-based oral health promotion initiatives are essential for addressing the oral health needs of diverse populations and promoting positive health behaviors at the community level. By leveraging the strengths of community partnerships, evidence-based interventions, and sustainable practices, these initiatives have the potential to make a significant impact on oral health outcomes and contribute to overall health and well-being.

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