

The Power of Innovation

A health care system to meet our needs

NSW Health
Symposium Oct 2012

PERFECT PEGS PROJECT

Keeping People Healthy to Avoid Unnecessary Hospitalisation

Introduction

Oral health costs the country in excess of \$3.4 billion pa. an given the high level of substance use in the Hunter New England Region, clinicians identified a need for financially sustainable Oral Health educational materials as well as accessible dental care for adolescent and adult drug users.

Aim

The Perfect Pegs Brochures were aimed at:

- increasing awareness and preventing deterioration to the oral health of substance users;
- improving oral health practices, health and wellness of adolescents, Aboriginal people and high risk client groups;
- avoiding unnecessary hospitalisations for those with chronic conditions exacerbated by substance use and poor oral health.

Method

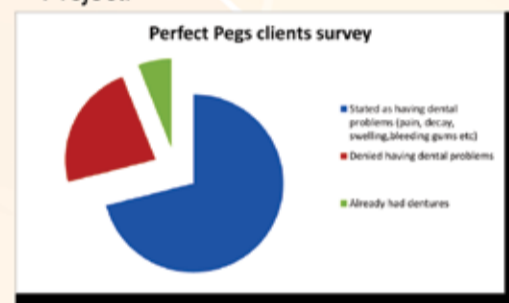
150 substance users were surveyed - 71% had dental problems, 63% did not access dental services and 54% suffered from chronic illnesses. In light of this result it was thought likely the adolescent population were unaware of substance use effects on oral health.

Local GP's participated by establishing a treatment plan for their clients with chronic illnesses to enable referral to dentists under the Medicare assisted scheme and to address their chronic health needs.

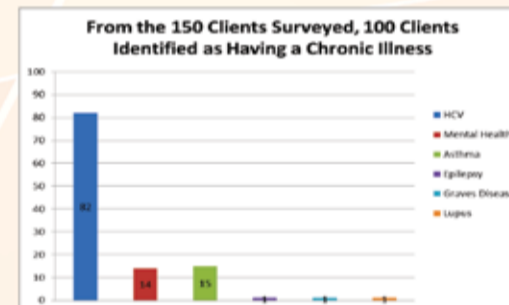


Results

From the 168 clients accessing treatment from the Cessnock Drug and Alcohol Service 150 clients voluntarily participated in the Perfect Pegs Project.



100 clients indicated they suffered from a chronic illness such as Hepatitis C, Asthma, Epilepsy, Graves Disease or Lupus.



Patterns and Client Outcomes Referral

- 58% of clients engaged in treatment with HNELHD Oral Health Service:
 - 3.5% now have dentures;
 - 96.5% had other treatments.
- 28.5% of clients were referred to private dentist under Medicare:
 - 56% now have dentures;
 - 33% had other treatment;
 - 11% failed to attend appointments.
- 13.5% of clients declined referral to either service.



Conclusion

The project identified: the alarming effects of drugs and alcohol on oral health;

- the demand for education/ dental health promotion;
- the need for increased awareness of oral health treatment services for this client group.

Those who received treatment reported:

- increased self-esteem, wellbeing and employment and;
- a decrease in oral infection and pain.

From engagement with GP's clients were able to address other chronic health issues.

Children of substance using parents have priority with Oral Health Early Intervention Programs and this was well utilised.

Acknowledgements

- Cessnock Drug & Alcohol Clinical Services
- Community Engagement & Action Program Project Officer
- Port West Community Drug Action Team
- Hunter New England Oral Health
- Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Clinical Services
- Whole of Family Team



The Perfect Pegs Brochures were launched on 17 April, 2012. A BBQ was held for the clients who participated in the project. At the launch all clients received product / information packs.



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District