Evaluating Access to Oral Healthcare in Pregnant Patients

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Introduction

- Spike of estrogen and progesterone can increase the risk of gum disease
- Linked to adverse outcomes: preterm birth and low birth weight
- Dental treatments are safe during all trimesters
- Promoting awareness and understanding of importance of oral health for well being of mother and fetus
- Help them overcome challenges and complete their dental treatment plans effectively.

Aims

- Understand the obstacles that pregnant women face in accessing dental care

Methods

- 484 patients referred through pOHP Jan/2022-Dec/2023
- 20 participants randomly chosen that attended 1 appointment or more
- 20 participants randomly chosen, did not attend any appointments
- Called patients, explained study and scheduled an interview
- Interview – Microsoft Teams – recorded and transcribed

Preliminary Results

- Median age: 27 years old
- 5 private 1.0%
- 243 self-paid 50.2%
- 236 Medicaid 48.8%
- 37 one or more appointment
- 206 no appointments
- 33 one or more appointment
- 203 no appointment
- 26 no emergency
- 7 one emergency
- 4 more than 1 emergency
- 19 no emergency
- 10 one emergency
- 4 more than one emergency
- 10 had dental visits during pregnancy
- 6 had treatment during pregnancy
- 3 had treatment during pregnancy
- 11 had treatment during pregnancy

Challenges

- Despite initial agreement, some participants did not show up for scheduled appointments.
- Attempts to contact participants via phone were often unsuccessful.
- Several participants required multiple rescheduling attempts due to conflicting schedules or personal reasons.
- Even after rescheduling, some participants still did not attend their appointments.
- Language differences posed a challenge for communication with certain participants.

- Study population: Must be over 18, must speak English
- Questions:
  - marriage status
  - vehicle status
  - survey of Knowledge on importance of oral health care and how it can affect them or their unborn child/children
  - Emotional and physical comfort level during pregnancy and appointment
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