

Nutrition care practices of dietitians and oral health professionals to optimize dental health in ‘real-world’ settings: A scoping review

J. Rover de Mello¹, A. Vanzan¹, A. Cammer¹, J. Lieffers¹

¹College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK

Introduction: The burden of dental diseases (e.g., tooth decay) is substantial worldwide. Dietary intakes are often implicated as a cause of dental diseases. Both dietitians and oral health professionals (OHP) (e.g., dentists, dental hygienists, dental therapists) may provide nutrition care to optimize dental health.

Objectives: To identify and map studies that have captured information on nutrition care practices of dietitians and OHP to improve dental health.

Methods: A literature search was conducted in May/2019 using the following databases: Medline, CINAHL, and EMBASE. Studies met the following criteria: English-language, published from 2000-2019, and conducted in a World-Bank high income country.

Results: In total, 76 articles were included for analysis. Most articles described cross-sectional survey studies (73.7%) and did not have a specific focus on nutrition, but rather other topics (e.g., preventative dentistry). In total, 97.4%, and 5.3% of studies reported on nutrition care practices of OHP and dietitians/nutritionists, respectively. In total, 28.9% and 85.5% of articles provided information on nutrition assessment and nutrition intervention practices, respectively. Most studies provided only general/unspecific information on assessment and intervention practices (e.g., dietary analysis, nutrition counseling, diet advice) and lacked specific information (e.g., types of dietary assessment tools used, type of information provided to patients, time spent on nutrition care). Barriers to providing nutrition care by OHP were noted in 14 articles and were common (e.g., lack of knowledge, time). Few studies reported on interprofessional collaboration between dietitians and OHP.

Conclusion: Numerous studies have captured information on nutrition care practices related to dental health, however, there is limited information available on the type of care provided. Few studies have examined the practices of dietitians and interprofessional collaboration between dietitians and OHP.

Significance to the Field of Dietetics: Dietitians have an important role in working collaboratively with OHP to help decrease the burden of dental diseases.