

Facilitators and barriers to twice-daily tooth brushing among children with special health care needs

Maria Campanaro

Purpose: Compared to typically developing children, children with special health care needs (CH-SCN) are at increased risk for poor oral health including dental decay. Facilitators and barriers to twice-daily tooth brushing among preschool-aged CSHCN were examined to identify modifiable caregiver behaviors or beliefs that could improve the oral health of CSHCN.

Methods: Ninety caregivers of CSHCN, aged 23 to 62 months, were interviewed about home oral hygiene routines and what interferes with, and supports, a habit of twice-daily brushing.

Results: Nearly all (98%) of caregivers had begun brushing their child's teeth at the time of the interview. Of those, 50% reported twice-daily brushing of child's teeth. Caregivers identified having a variety of tooth brushing supplies as a support to twice-daily brushing ($p = .02$). Caregivers who reported a lack of tooth-brushing skills were less likely to brush their child's teeth twice daily ($p = .02$).

Conclusions: Overall, the facilitators and barriers in this study were also identified by parents of typically developing children. Efforts to improve all caregivers' oral hygiene skills are needed. For caregivers of CSHCN, oral health teaching opportunities may exist among professionals who provide ongoing medical care, special services, and therapies.

Thesis Committee:

Colleen E. Huebner, PhD, MPH (Chair)

Beth Ellen Davis, MD, MPH



This study was supported by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (Title V, Social Security Act), grant #T76MC00011.