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Poster Title: Does oral health knowledge and behaviour improve following brief dental care professional (DCP) delivered educational intervention in schools?

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Background: Poor oral health in childhood can result in significant problems later in life. Individual oral health education during clinical encounters has been shown to be largely ineffective and community-delivered approaches to oral health education are warranted.

Objectives: To assess change in oral health care knowledge and oral health behaviours in children following group oral health education delivered in the school setting by a dental care professional.

Methods: 150 children (10-11 years) received a 60-minute classroom-based interactive educational session. All children completed oral health knowledge questionnaire and self-reported oral health behaviours before, immediately after and 6 weeks following intervention.

Results: Children"s dental knowledge significantly improved following intervention (F (2, 292) = 49.92, p< 0.001, partial η2 = 0.26), with improvement evident at immediate follow-up (t(147) = -8.01, p < 0.001, η2 = 0.31) and maintained 6 weeks later (t(148) = -8.91, p < 0.001, η2 = 0.35). Significantly more children used dental floss 6 weeks after the intervention compared with baseline (Z = -3.99, p < 0.001). No significant differences were detected in tooth brushing or dietary behaviours.

Conclusions: Community preventative oral health education can generate short-term improvements in children’s knowledge of oral health and aspects of oral hygiene behaviour.