Abstract

Background: Hearing loss and auditory symptoms such as tinnitus is rising or noise in the ear) affect people of all ages. Approximately 3-2 per 1000 children are born in the U.S. with a diagnosis of hearing loss. The prevalence increases with age, with almost half of adults 70 years and older experiencing some hearing loss. Patients with hearing impairment may experience challenges in communication, loss of confidence, lower quality of life, difficulties in treatment needs, failure to receive accurate informed consent for care, and miscommunication of treatment recommendations. The prevalence of hearing loss, especially among older adults, is important for oral health professionals to learn strategies to effectively communicate with patients. In addition, dental professionals may be at risk of developing hearing loss or tinnitus due to noise exposure sustained during clinical practice.

In 2017, an innovative, collaborative educational experience for dental hygiene and audiology students was developed and implemented at the University of North Carolina. The purpose of this initiative was to provide dental hygiene students an opportunity to learn about the audiology profession, collaboration with audiologists, hearing assessments, their own hearing health, noise-induced hearing loss and protection. The objectives were to: 1) increase awareness of hearing loss, its consequences, and strategies for prevention; 2) improve communication with patients with hearing loss, and 3) enhance understanding of hearing screening and the audiology profession.

Methods:

SAE dental hygiene and audiology students provided hearing screenings for 33 dental hygiene students (4th and 5th year students) and 3 dental hygiene education/graduate students. Subsequently, a didactic session about the topics mentioned was taught by an Audiology faculty member. The hearing screening and the screening and education session were completed by the students. Before-after changes in students’ perception of knowledge were assessed.

Results:

Inconsistent and perhaps limited exposure for Dental Hygiene students exists in the U.S. with a detectable degree of hearing loss.1 The prevalence increases with age, in the ear) affect people of all ages. Approximately 2-3 per 1000 children are born in the ear) affect people of all ages. Approximately 2-3 per 1000 children are born in.

Objectives:

• Improved knowledge of hearing loss, components of the audiogram, consequences of hearing loss, types and levels of noise, types of hearing protection, work-related risks for dental professionals, effective communication for patients with hearing impairment, and how and when to make appropriate referrals to an audiologist.

• The profession of audiology: Students who attended the screening and/or lecture (n=35)


• 2. Division of Audiology and Hearing Sciences, School of Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill


• 4. Medical College of Wisconsin. Health care providers in small group demonstration and practice sessions with the Audiology students.