



Health Literacy

Case Study

Case Study: The Impact of Motivational Interviewing on Caries Risk Behaviors in the U.S.

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of motivational interviewing (MI) on caries risk-related behaviors of mothers enrolled in a Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program. Mothers (n=72) were asked to complete pre- and post-test questionnaires four weeks apart that measured four constructs: valuing dental health, permissiveness, convenience and change difficulty, or openness to health information. Those receiving the intervention (n=40) received an MI session and follow-up telephone calls aimed at promoting positive oral health behaviors.

Although no significant changes were found in the four constructs, those in the MI group exhibited statistically significant positive changes in number of times the children's teeth were cleaned or brushed ($p=0.001$) and the use of shared eating utensils ($p=0.035$). Other pertinent caries risk-related behaviors such as feeding practices and use of sweets to reward or modify behavior were not significantly affected by MI. The conclusion was that MI of parents resulted in modest changes to caries-related behaviors.

References:

1. Freudenthal JJ, Bowen DM. Motivational interviewing to decrease parental risk-related behaviors for early childhood caries. *J Dent Hyg.* 2010 Winter;84(1):29-34. Epub 2010 Jan 1.