



Health Literacy

Case Study

Case Study: Use of Motivational Interviewing in Mothers to Prevent Caries in Children – Report from the U.S.

Motivational Interviewing (MI), a technique developed by clinical psychologists Drs. William R. Miller and Steven Rollnick, is defined as “directive, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence.” Thus it is more focused and goal-directed than simply imparting health information. ¹

Motivational interviewing was compared to traditional health education in the prevention of early childhood caries in a randomized clinical study. Mothers of 240 infants of Southeast Asian ethnicity aged 6 to 18 months considered to be at high risk for developing caries were randomly assigned to one of the two study groups. Prior to randomization, children were stratified into two age groups; 6-12 months and > 12 months. ²

Those in the traditional health education group received an educational pamphlet and watched an 11 minute videotape: “Preventing Tooth Decay for Infants and Toddlers.” Mothers in the MI group received the same information as control mothers as well as a 45 minute counseling session, two phone classes within the first 6 weeks and four phone calls over the following 20 weeks and two postcards reminding them of their behavioral change.



Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future

Stop Caries NOW for a Cavity-Free Future

An Oral Health Resource

After two years, with 85% of children available for follow up, results indicated that MI had a significant impact on the prevention of early childhood caries. After adjusting for age and sex, children in the MI group had significantly fewer new caries (decayed or filled surfaces) than those in the control group with an odds ratio = 0.35, (0.15, 0.83). Thus this case study demonstrates that MI has the potential to impact caries prevention through parental behavior modification.

For more information contact:

Dr. Weinstein
Dental Public Health Sciences
University of Washington, School of Dentistry, Suite B-509, Box 357475,
Seattle, Wash.
98195-7475
e-mail philw@u.washington.edu

References:

1. Rollnick S, Miller WR. "What is MI?" Motivational Interviewing (Resources for clinicians, researchers, and trainers), May 2001.
<http://motivationalinterview.org/clinical/whatismi.html> accessed February 2011.
2. Philip Weinstein, Rosamund Harrison and Tonya Benton. Motivating mothers to prevent caries: Confirming the beneficial effect of counseling; J Am Dent Assoc 2006;137;789-793