



Risk Assessment

Brief Summary

Description and Use:

Risk assessment is a protocol or statistical model based on a collection of risk factors/indicators used to collectively predict an individual's risk of acquiring a disease and mitigating future risk through management of these risk factors. Various models are available based on clinical forms or computer based programs.

Effectiveness and Efficacy:

Past dental caries experience has shown to be the single best predictor of future dental caries experience irrespective of age across various prediction models. Among young children (toddlers to preschool) risk assessment models using a combination of risk factors have shown a high predictive ability (SN and SP greater than 0.80). Among older children and adolescents, previous dental caries experience alone is the single best predictor of additional dental caries occurring in the future.

Recommendations for community-based protocol:

Dental caries risk assessment provides a method to identify high risk individuals and groups, the health of patients and to maximize the probability that prevention technologies will be effective.

Cost:

Dental caries risk assessment provides a method to minimize false positives (individuals incorrectly identified as high risk) to improve cost efficiency for treatments, such as sealants, when public resources are limited. The cost of treatment associated with an applied dental caries risk assessment program could further be minimized by utilizing allied health professionals for the delivery of preventive services.



Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future

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Safety:

Dental caries risk assessment can be used to maximize true positives while minimizing false negatives to mitigate potential safety concerns caused by withholding care or, providing unnecessary invasive and irreversible procedures.