

Teaching Philosophies and Patient Safety in Pediatric Dental Education

Kyle Brown, Brett Chiquet, DDS, PhD, Department of Pediatric Dentistry, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Dentistry, Houston, TX, USA.

Objectives: Methods of teaching patient safety can be influenced by many factors, such as the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) requirements, institution specific protocols, and individualized teaching philosophies of dental educators. The objectives of this study were to evaluate how patient safety is taught for pharmacologic behavior guidance techniques used in pediatric dentistry.

Methods: We aim to capture pediatric dental educator demographics, reported teaching styles, safety teaching methods, and attitudes toward patient safety using the validated “Attitudes to Patient Safety Questionnaire” (APSQ) assessment tool. This will help us determine what is currently being taught to dental learners and how dental educator teaching styles are reflected by their attitudes toward patient safety. Following email invitation to participate in this study, a response rate of 8.9% of pediatric dentistry faculty from CODA accredited schools was received.

Results: There were no differences noted between demographic variables and teaching styles ($p>0.05$). More pediatric faculty strongly agreed that patient safety was of utmost importance compared to teaching learners or quality of dental work ($p=0.01$). There was no difference in methods of teaching safety, safety procedures, or safety reporting between the respondents ($p>0.05$). Responses to APSQ domains showed significant differences between safety domains ($p<0.0001$), with the strongest levels of strong agreement chosen for domains concerning patient safety in the curriculum (70.19%), the inevitability of error (66.15%) and role of team functioning (66.69%) while the lowest levels of strong agreement were chosen for the domains of professional incompetence (7.69%), work hours (23.9%) and patient involvement (28.9%).

Conclusion: A diverse sampling of pediatric dentistry faculty across CODA accredited schools believe safety training is of value and belongs in dental curriculum. However, philosophies about causes and prevention of errors vary.

This study was supported by the UTSD Student Research Program.