

Incorporating Dental Hygiene Students into an Interprofessional Educational Event: Comparing Undergraduate Student to Graduate Student Responses

Kelly Anderson, RDH, MHS¹ • Barbara Smith, PT, PH.D² • Gina Brown, MPAS, PA-C,³
School of Oral Health, Department of Dental Hygiene¹ • Department of Physical Therapy² • Department of Physician Assistant³

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

Dental hygienists (DH) are underutilized in interdisciplinary collaboration, and what utilization that does take place is not well studied.

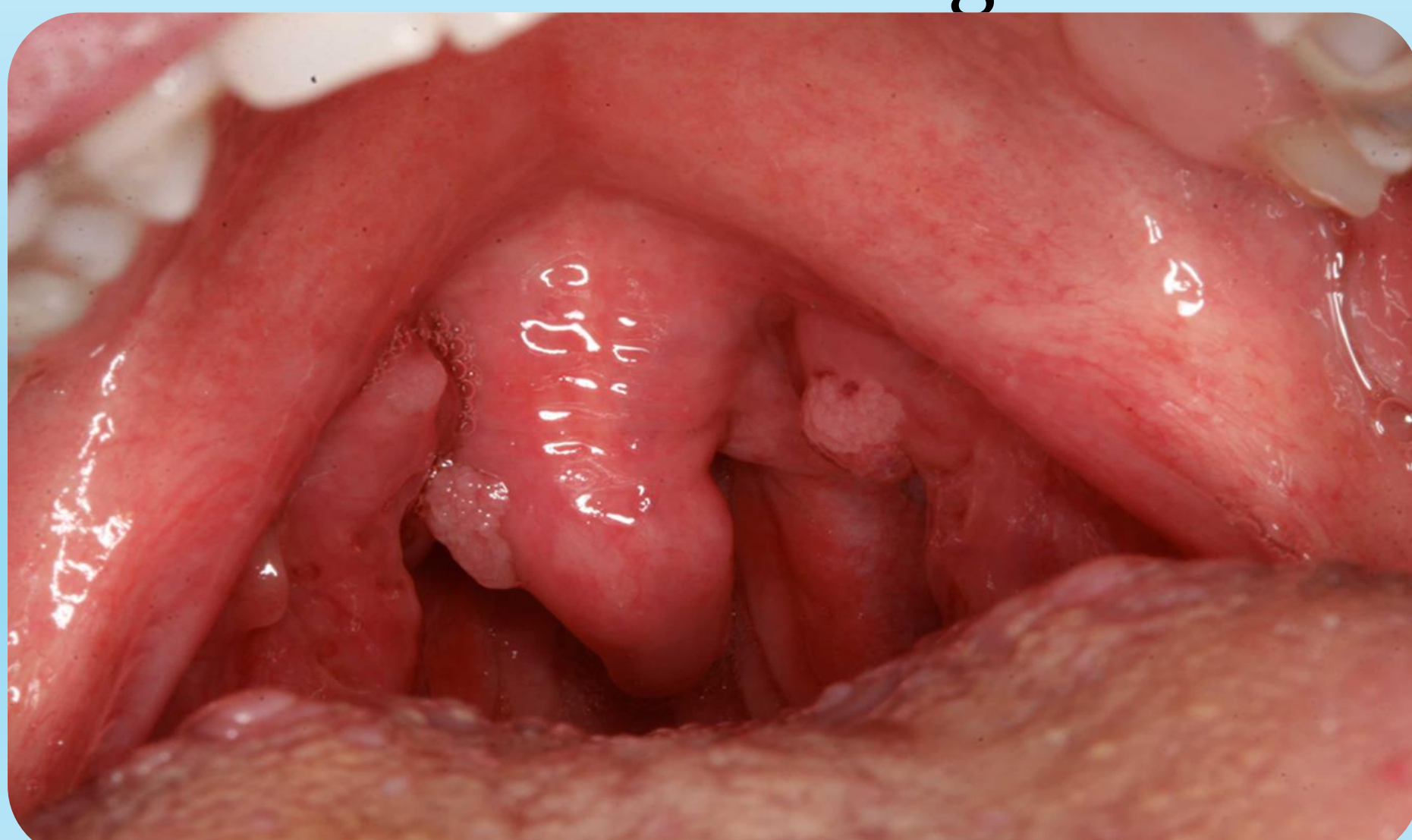
As interprofessional education (IPE) becomes an important tool in developing a collaborative health care model for patients, the importance of oral health should be recognized as a vital component.

OBJECTIVE

The primary goals of this study were to determine if undergraduate DH students had different perceptions of an IPE event than graduate students, and if the concept of oral health was valued by other disciplines.

Details of Human Papilloma Virus Case

- Foreign patient
- Language barrier
- Culturally sensitive issues
- Sensitive history
- No dental insurance coverage



Collaborative health care practice



METHODS/METHODOLOGY

- Students (n=150) from eight disciplines participated in an IPE simulated case study.
- Teams were comprised of students who were in their program's final academic year including dental hygiene (DH), physician assistant (PA), physical therapy (PT), speech language pathology (SLP), health services management & community development (HSMCD), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP), medical laboratory science (MLS), first year medical students.
- Standardized patients were used with a case centered on oral human papilloma virus (HPV) with culturally sensitive issues.
- A survey using a Likert scale (1-5) was given before and after the exercise, and students answered opened-ended questions.
- Frequency tables described the participants and their open ended responses. Nonparametric statistics were used to analyze the survey results.

RESULTS

Dental hygiene(DH), physician assistant (PA), physical therapy (PT), communication sciences and disorders (CSD) had sufficient numbers to analyze:

- (1) No differences existed in pre and post test survey scores between graduate (n=118) and undergraduate DH students (n=32)
- (2) Responses to open ended questions were also similar.

- "I learned what a dental hygienist can do besides cleaning teeth.
- "I can use their knowledge if I ever have patients with mouth/oral problems."
- "I learned about other professions & scope of practice. I will use this when I go to external practicum & begin working."
- "This confirmed how valuable each profession is in healthcare team."

CONCLUSIONS

- The undergraduate DH students had the same perceptions about IPE as graduate students.
- Incorporating DH students into IPE activities was an important addition to promote oral health concepts.