

Medical Dental Integration for Vaccinations: A Targeted Intervention to Increase Rates of Tdap, MCV4, and HPV9 vaccinations in children ages 9-17.

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Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Children older than 9 years of age typically see the dentist more often than they do their primary care provider.¹ This highlights an opportunity to collaborate with dentistry to promote timely vaccinations and well child checks (WCC). This study aimed to increase vaccination rates of the Tdap, MCV4 and HPV9 vaccines by 5% in patients aged 9-17 through vaccination at pediatric dental visits or via assisted follow-up scheduling.

METHODS: The project was conducted at a large Federally Qualified Healthcare Center with three pilot dental clinics that were co-located within medical clinics. Data was collected from 5/24/21-10/29/21. Reports were run daily to identify patients ages 9-17 who were overdue for vaccinations, vaccine reminders were added to the electronic medical record, and large colorful flags were placed in patient charts as a visual cue for providers. Patients were offered same-day vaccines or the opportunity to schedule a follow-up visit with their medical clinic. Chart review was conducted to determine if vaccines were administered the same day or within 30-days of the dental visit.

RESULTS: Across all clinics during the 5-month period, 3.4% (N=119) of all patients vaccinated were due to medical-dental integration (MDI) intervention. Montbello Clinic was particularly successful, with 7.3% of patients vaccinated in the 5-month period being due to MDI. Factors for success were buy-in from clinic staff, visual cues in charts and in the office, and an in-clinic MDI champion.

CONCLUSION: It is evident that there is a significant benefit to integrating the medical and dental disciplines at the routine dental visit. Patients were receptive to discussing and receiving vaccinations during dental visits. The dental office appears to be an effective and appropriate place to offer reminders regarding vaccines and preventative health measures to patients and their parents. This highlights that dentists, dental assistants, and auxiliary team members play a powerful role in promoting and improving vaccination rates.