

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH DENTISTRY**

**PATIENT OUTREACH PROGRAMMES**

**“THE BEST WAY *OUT* OF DISEASE IS THROUGH  
*OUTREACH*”-1**

**CONTEXT**

The Department of Public Health Dentistry is headed by Dr..Jagannatha GV M.D.S., and ably assisted by Dr. Nagappan M.D.S., and Dr. Nagaland T M.D.S., and Dr. Dilshad Banu B.D.S. The Public Health Dentistry department focuses mainly on improving the oral health status of the community that we are catering to on the long-term and ensure the accessibility and availability of dental health care to everyone.

The outreach activities are concerned with the organization and execution of both screening and treatment camps in near and distant locations. Camps can either be a screening camp where the target population is evaluated for the presence of any dental pathology and then create awareness, motivated and advised on the appropriate treatment required, or a treatment camp where the patients are screened and routine dental treatment like scaling, restorations, and simple extractions are performed at the camp venue itself.

Outreach activities have since evolved into a model for providing effective, sustainable, and comprehensive oral health services in community-based settings by combining service, education and research.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- ✓ To act as a primary care provider for individuals and groups of patients. This includes providing emergency and multidisciplinary comprehensive oral health care, directing health promotion and disease prevention activities, and using advanced treatment modalities.
- ✓ Diagnose the oral health problems and their effects on the community and to identify the most common community oral health problems in order to effectively tackle the endemic problems of the locality.
- ✓ To plan and provide multidisciplinary oral health care for a wide variety of patients including patients with special needs.
- ✓ To function effectively provide oral health care in the outpatient setting and a hospital setting.
- ✓ Reduction in the burden of oral diseases concomitant with improvement in oral health status of the community can only be achieved through public outreach.
- ✓ To apply scientific principles to the provision of oral health care. This includes using critical thinking, evidenced or outcomes-based clinical decision-making and technology-based information retrieval systems.
- ✓ To utilize the values of professional ethics, lifelong learning, patient centered care, adaptability, and acceptance of cultural diversity.
- ✓ To understand the oral health needs of communities and engage in community service.
- ✓ Continuous and comprehensive overview the dental camps on a regular basis in order to ensure a fluid chain of patient care from the primary to tertiary level.

- ✓ Creating public awareness on the commonly occurring oral diseases and also in other healthcare issues plaguing society especially non communicable lifestyle diseases.
- ✓ To create awareness on special days meant to commemorate health care issues such as World Oral Health Day, World Anti Cancer Awareness Month, World No Tobacco Day, World First Aid Day, National Communal Harmony Week.

## **PRACTICE**

The department of Public Health Dentistry conducts outreach activities through the following methods

- ✓ Conducting camps in nearby areas such as schools, colleges, old age homes, orphanages, factories, churches, local community centres.
- ✓ Satellite centres at Poonjeri for rural oral health care service needs which caters to the number of clustered villages along the Poonjeri-Mahabalipuram stretch
- ✓ The staff and CRIs posted daily in Poonjeri also conduct outreach programmes in small villages, orphanages and government schools located near Poonjeri to enhance the reach towards the rural sector from where patients in need of dental treatment are initially being referred to the primary health care level at Poonjeri.
- ✓ Patients in need of advanced treatment are referred and are also provided access to free transport from Poonjeri Primary health centre twice a week to Chettinad Dental Hospital for procurement of care at the tertiary level.
- ✓ Collaboration with Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute is established through the Outreach Patient Receiving Facility constructed in the premises of the institution for

patients brought from Medical camps in order to provide access to dental treatment as well.

- ✓ The follow up of the patients referred from the satellite centers is managed and tracked by the department in order to ensure seamless and continuous care of the patients.
- ✓ Outreach activities are also conducted in IT companies along the Rajiv Gandhi IT Expressway
- ✓ Apart from private institutions, dental screening camps are also conducted in partnership with government institutions such as the Metropolitan Transport Corporation in order to ensure the oral health of the employees who are usually from financially disadvantaged backgrounds.
- ✓ Outreach activities such as Health Education Talks, rallies, campaigns are also conducted in schools, colleges and public areas on special days such as World Oral Health Day, World Anti Cancer Awareness Month, World No Tobacco Day, World First Aid Day, National Communal Harmony Week in order to inculcate a spirit of oral healthcare and to realize the correlation of oral and general health in order to emphasize the importance of maintenance of oral hygiene and community participation from a young age and also to increase interest in the environmental crisis on Earth Day, World Environment Day, Plastic Free Waste Campaign, etc.

## **OBSTACLES**

- ✓ The major obstacle faced by the institution is obtaining the approval of higher authorities in order to conduct oral screening cum treatment camps due to government restrictions
- ✓ The transport of oral healthcare personnel to distance areas along with the equipment and infrastructure necessary becomes an issue of logistics
- ✓ Inculcating public involvement in their oral hygiene after overcoming difficulty in accessibility, lack of awareness of importance of oral health in correlation with general health is a concern

## **IMPACT**

The lack of availability of basic oral health education and simple intercession to a larger sector of population, resulting in poor oral health also affecting the quality and standard of life is a major concern to be tackled through outreach activities conducted for public welfare.

These programs are found to be very effective for diminishing oral health unevenness in privileged versus underserved sectors of society which are readily noticeable in

- ✓ Increase in flow of patients from underprivileged backgrounds
- ✓ Higher number of patients reporting to the screening camps compared to earlier years due to more public awareness and positive response towards dental treatment.
- ✓ Broader age groups reporting for dental check-up and for treatment

- ✓ Betterment of awareness of oral hygiene practices in school going children and youth
- ✓ Clinically noticeable improvement in the oral hygiene status of the patients.

Each program is unique, yet all share the goals of service, education, and research, while fostering local collaboration for sustainability, both in health outcomes and finances. Partnerships with local organizations and healthcare providers are cultivated to ensure the continuation of services.

The impact of such outreach activities can be felt in the decrease in dental disease with a concomitant improvement in the oral hygiene status in the population covered and surveyed. This can be attributed to both treatment and dental education rendered to the general public.

## **RESOURCES REQUIRED**

- Manpower

Although the CRIs are accompanied by doctors, the utilization of a dental nurse/assistant would be convenient especially for data entry and guidance of the patients.

- Fully functional mobile dental van for treatment camp

# Best Practices- 2

## Title – Faculty Women Empowerment Program

### *Context:*

We as an institute give prime importance to our institutional goals which is student support and development. As we believe that students support is mainly provided by faculties. Thus empowering the faculties instils student development on both professional and personal note. Thus our institute has embarked various women empowerment program. As the institution holds more than 60% women teachers who play an important role in training students in various aspects. These programs were planned mainly to improve the competency levels of the faculties so as to match to that of the students. To improve the ability to utilise the available resources.

### *Objective:*

The primary objective of these women empowerment sessions were to train the faculties to understand the students from their perspective and to inculcate professionalism within them, both in terms of career and life. This modality has proven to inculcate multifaceted approach in handling students.

### *The Practice:*

Periodic meetings were held. The meeting were comprised of lecture and discussions on various headers including gender sensitisation, Management of non-complaint student, work life balance, psychological transition in the mind of students, self motivation etc., these topics were discussed by experts in the respective fields. Wherein measures to build-up self esteem of students, importance of

society, relations at home, college have been discussed. Inputs will be taken up from everyone and protocols were devised meticulously to create an impact on students.

***Obstacles:***

During earlier sessions, minimal obstacles were evident, as each had a pre-existing notion about handling students. Following sequential sessions, this perspective was altered to accept the upcoming student challenges.

***Impact:***

These modalities have created drastic alterations in the mentality of faculties, as each of them was trained from different backgrounds. This approach has given awareness about the present problems undergone by the students and modalities to approach the same. These sessions enables the faculties to adopt a “Problem Based Learning” approach to deal with students. This also enabled the students to communicate with the faculties. Thereby reducing the amount of stress imposed on the student. And also directly impacted the results of the students, which was shown to be escalated compared to the previous years.