Abstract

The overall goal of this project was to decrease dental plaque scores of residents living at Wild Flower Court (WFC) facility through improved oral health education of staff members. The examiner evaluated WFC nursing staff’s knowledge on providing patients with oral care and denture maintenance both before and after oral care training. The staff knowledge levels were correlated with residents’ plaque levels to determine if a relationship existed. The hypothesis was that WFC residents would have lower dental plaque levels after nursing staff received the oral health and denture maintenance training. Twenty-seven full-time WFC staff members received the oral health and denture maintenance training and were given a knowledge pre-test and post-training test. The same test was given at one and two month follow-ups to determine levels of retained knowledge. A baseline plaque index (PI) was collected on thirty-six WFC residents 65 years of age and older using a modified version of the Simplified Oral Hygiene Index (OHI-S) and a modified Budtz-Jorgensen PI. The PI was collected from residents prior to staff receiving training, and then again at one and two months after staff training. Among the staff that received oral health and denture maintenance training, the post-test revealed a statistically significant increase in knowledge from the pretest ($\alpha \leq .05$). Decreased resident PI levels were observed at the one and two month follow-ups. The study provides evidence that educational training to the staff can effectively reduce the PI levels of WFC residents.