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Amanda Leaders

Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne

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Testing the Effectiveness of a Reminder Cue in an Oral Health Program

Amanda Leaders and Dr. Bridget Leonard, Faculty Mentor
Department of Management and Marketing

This study examines the effectiveness of a mirror cling reminder cues in increasing tooth brushing for preschool children enrolled in local Head Start programs. Through responsive text messages periodically over a 6-week period, parents were asked to report the number of times they brushed their child's teeth, and whether they or their child suggested the tooth brushing. They also responded to a follow up question three months later asking whether their mirror cling was still up, and how often they were currently brushing their child's teeth. Although results indicate that parents liked the mirror cling, there is no evidence that it increased the frequency of tooth brushing for the duration of the study. When it came to the perception of the mirror cling, however, parents reported that they felt the mirror cling helped to remind both themselves and their child to brush twice a day.

HYPOTHESIS 1: The mirror cling should increase reported tooth brushing.

Test: T Test (df=393): 903 p=369
Survey Question: How many times did your child brush their teeth at home yesterday?

HYPOTHESIS 2 & 3: The mirror cling should remind children to brush their teeth more often/parent's to brush their child's teeth more often.

Test: McNemar Test
Survey Question: If your child brushed their teeth at home yesterday, who suggested the tooth brushing?

Conclusion

The results of this study show that there is no evidence of a significant increase in tooth brushing at this time. However, it is notable that the mirror cling was perceived as a helpful reminder.

Social desirability bias may be playing a role in the responses to how many times the parents brushed their children's teeth. However, again, the important point is that parents perceived the cling as a helpful reminder to brush more. Not only did they feel that it helped them remember to brush more, but it helped them and their child to remember to brush more.

References and Acknowledgements


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