

Investigating Newfoundland and Labrador Primary Care Physicians' Knowledge of Basic Dental Care

Practice Points

1. Most primary care physicians (PCPs) see patients for dental problems more than once a month; infection and pain are the most common presentations.
2. Most primary care physicians received <2 hours of education on dental problems during medical school and <2 hours during residency.
3. Most primary care physicians believe that dental problems should be within their scope of practice, and that there should be more formal education on dental care throughout medical training.

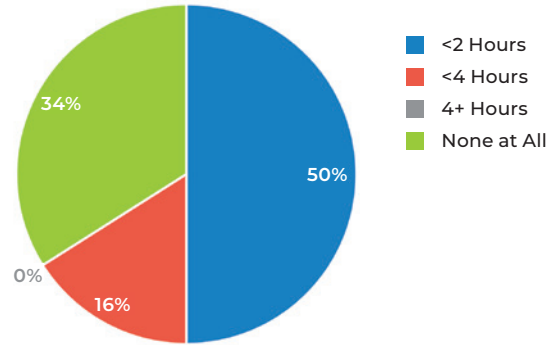


Figure 2. Hours of Formal Education on Dental Care During Residency

Methods (PIs: J. Vokey, M. Price)

1. Informal interviews with multiple family physicians completed to gather background information to guide development of most relevant survey questions.
2. Anonymous standardized online questionnaire circulated to family physicians via the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, the Family Practice Renewal Program, direct contact with community clinics, and by word of mouth.
3. Responses included linear numeric scales, frequency scales, and Likert scales.
4. Survey respondents had the opportunity to submit short answers when applicable.

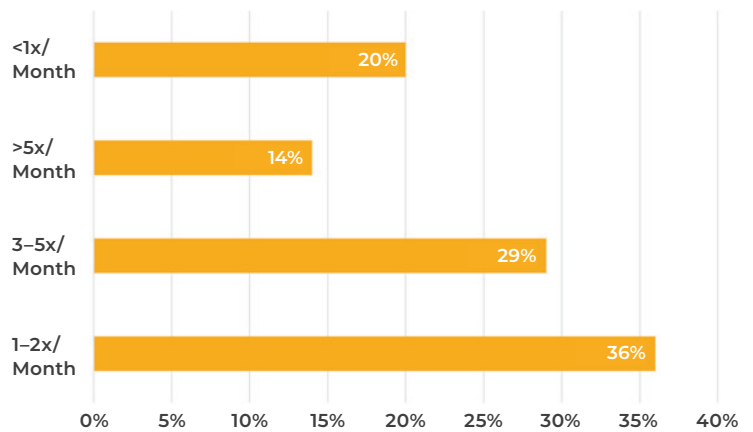


Figure 3. Frequency of Oral Health Concerns Presenting in Primary Care

Results

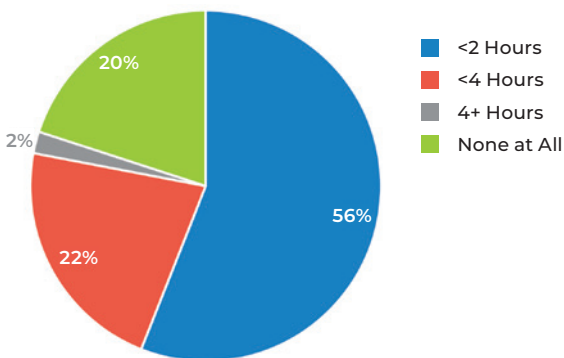


Figure 1. Hours of Formal Education on Dental Care During Medical School

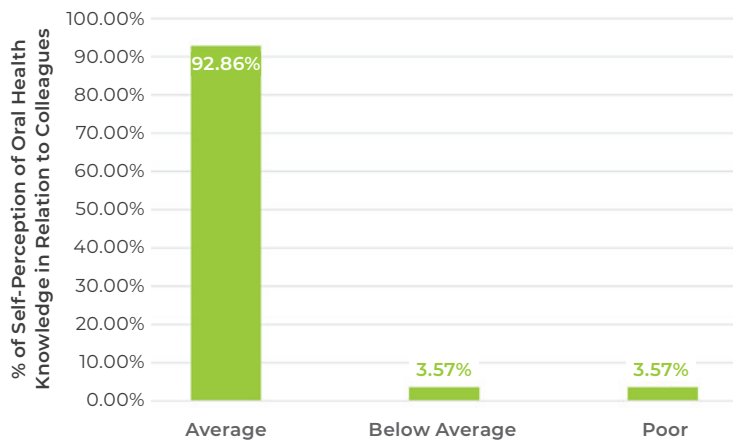


Figure 4. Self-Perception of Oral Health Knowledge in Relation to Colleagues

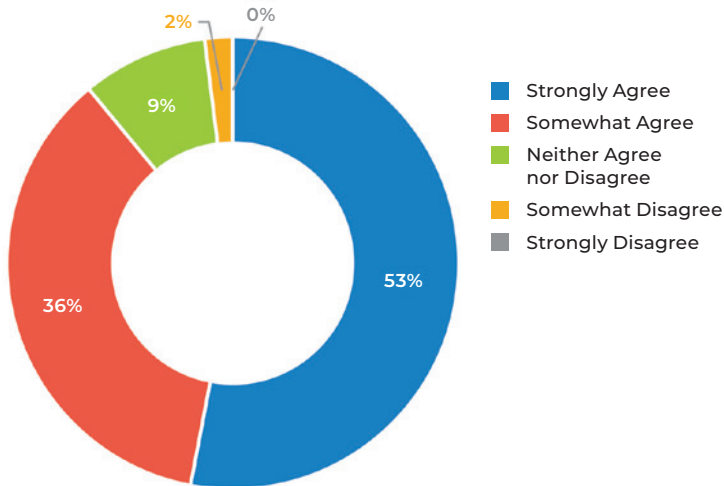


Figure 5. Should There Be More Formal Training in Dental Care for PCPs?

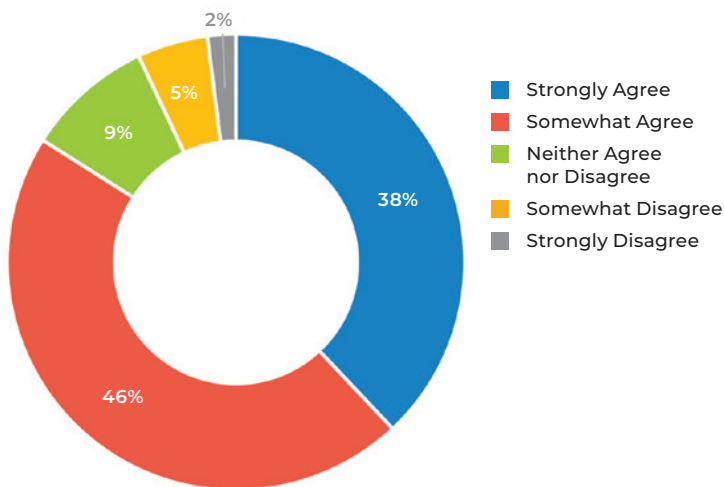


Figure 6. Should Dental Care be in the Scope of a PCP?

Conclusion

1. Ideally, all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would have affordable and timely access to a dentist. Although government is moving towards this, there may still be a large proportion of our population who will remain ineligible.
2. More education on dental care would benefit primary care providers and their patients. There is opportunity to add dental education at any stage of training.