



Each month we highlight a recent DPBRN publication, recent study results, or other important DPBRN information.

Abstract of DPBRN Publication of the Month

Methods Used by Dental Practice-based Research Network (DPBRN) Dentists to Diagnose Dental Caries Oper Dent 2011; 36: 2-11.

"Methods Used by Dental Practice-based Research Network (DPBRN) Dentists to Diagnose Dental Caries" appeared in the March 2011 issue of *Operative Dentistry*.

In this study, the authors (1) identified the methods that dentists in The DPBRN use to diagnose dental caries; (2) quantified their frequency of use and (3) tested the hypothesis that certain dentist and dental practice characteristics are significantly associated with their use.

They accomplished this by sending out a questionnaire about methods used for caries diagnosis to DPBRN dentists who reported doing some restorative dentistry; 522 dentists participated. Questions included the use of dental radiographs, the dental explorer, laser fluorescence, air-drying and fiber-optic devices and magnification as used when diagnosing primary, secondary/recurrent or non-specific caries lesions. Variations on the frequency of their use were tested using multivariate analysis and Bonferroni tests.

The results showed that, overall, the dental explorer was the instrument most commonly used to detect primary occlusal caries and caries at the margins of existing restorations. In contrast, laser fluorescence was rarely used to help diagnose occlusal primary caries. For proximal caries, radiographs were used to help diagnose 75%-100% of lesions by 96% of the DPBRN dentists. Dentists who use radiographs most often to assess proximal surfaces of posterior teeth were significantly more likely to also report providing a higher percentage of patients with individualized caries prevention and seeing a higher percentage of pediatric patients.

The authors concluded that the use of specific diagnostic methods varied substantially. The dental explorer and radiographs are still the most commonly used diagnostic methods.

Please go to <http://www.jopdentonline.org/doi/pdf/10.2341/10-137-CR> to read the article.

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