

National Research Agenda

Revised October 2001

Abstract

The profession of dental hygiene has made considerable progress over the past 30 years toward developing a unique body of knowledge to guide education, practice, and research. The 1993-1994 American Dental Hygienists' Association Council on Research published the first national dental hygiene research agenda in 1994. Since then, this agenda has focused dental hygienists' research efforts; however, the publication of two recent national reports-- the *Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health and Healthy People 2010*-- made it necessary to revise the research agenda.

After considering the input from participants of the Fourth National Dental Hygiene Research Conference sponsored by the American Dental Hygienists' Association, and evaluating the Surgeon General's report, the 2000-2001 ADHA Council on Research revised and prioritized the 1993-1994 agenda. A full report on the background of the ADHA National Research Agenda and the rationale for the prioritization and revision process that resulted in the following document appear on the ADHA Web site (www.adha.org) and will be published in the spring 2002 edition of the *Journal of Dental Hygiene*.

The American Dental Hygienists' Association
444 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 3400
Chicago, Illinois, 60611
312-440-8900
www.adha.org

Priority should be given to the following research topics:

1. **Health Services Research**

(Examples of categories and accompanying topics in the agenda that relate to health services research to be used in the justification for funding and subsequent publication of research findings)

Category I: Health Promotion/Disease Prevention

1. Assess the effectiveness of the communication process between the client and dental hygienist that leads to oral wellness.
2. Explore public policy issues related to oral health care.
3. Identify, describe, and explain ways to promote equitable access to oral healthcare.
4. Assess the cost-effectiveness of various oral health interventions (fluorides, sealants) in promotion oral health.
5. Investigate legislative initiatives on issues such as those that promote autonomy and decision making by dental hygienists.
6. Assess the impact of third parties on access to and utilization of oral health care services.

Category II: Education

1. Develop a predictive model for future needs/demands for dental hygiene personnel.

Category III: Clinical and Primary Care

1. Investigate the impact and effectiveness of alternative dental hygiene practice settings.
2. Assess the impact of emerging technology used by dental hygienists on the health outcomes of clients.
3. Design and evaluate alternative models for the delivery of oral health care.
4. Assess client compliance with recommended oral health care regimens.

5. Assess compliance with established standards of practice by dental hygiene practitioners.

Category IV: Individuals/Populations

1. Develop and test methods of primary prevention in adult populations at risk for primary and secondary enamel and root caries, with special attention to compromised, handicapped, and institutional groups.
2. Evaluate the efficacy of various oral hygiene regimens with institutionalized, handicapped, or otherwise compromised patients.
3. Examine the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of oral disease in underserved and at-risk populations.

Category V: Basic/Applied Sciences

1. Develop valid and reliable measures of quality dental hygiene care.
2. **Access to Care/Underserved Populations**
(Examples of categories and accompanying topics in the agenda that relate to access to care/underserved populations to be used in the justification for funding and subsequent publication of research findings)

Category I: Health Promotion/Disease Prevention

1. Identify, describe, and explain ways to promote equitable access to oral health care.
2. Investigate ethnic/cultural group differences as they relate to the promotion of oral health and preventive behaviors.
3. Investigate the concept of oral health self-care among all age, social, and cultural groups.
4. Describe, explain, or predict the relationship between environmental factors (culture, society, income, education) and oral health behaviors.
5. Assess the impact of third parties on access to and utilization of oral health care services.

Category III: Clinical and Primary Care

1. Investigate the impact and effectiveness of alternative dental hygiene practice settings.

2. Design and evaluate the alternative models for the delivery of oral health care.

3. **Health Promotion/Disease Prevention**

(Examples of categories and accompanying topics in the agenda that relate to health promotion/disease prevention to be used in the justification for funding and subsequent publication of research findings)

Category I: Health Promotion/Disease Prevention

1. Assess the effectiveness of dental hygienists in counseling patients regarding prevention and cessation of tobacco use.
2. Explore public policy issues related to oral health care.
3. Assess the cost-effectiveness of various oral health interventions (fluorides, sealants) in promoting oral health.
4. Develop and test easy-to-use self-assessment instruments to assist individuals of all ages in learning the signs and symptoms of oral diseases.

Category III: Clinical and Primary Care

1. Develop valid and reliable measures to be used in oral health research.
2. Assess the impact of emerging technology used by dental hygienists on the health outcomes of clients.
3. Assess client compliance with recommended oral health care regimens.

Category IV: Individuals/Populations

1. Develop and test methods of primary prevention in adult populations at risk for primary and secondary enamel and root caries, with special attention to compromised, handicapped, and institutional groups.
2. Develop and test methods for early diagnosis and screening of oral diseases for individuals at high risk for dental caries, periodontal diseases, and oral cancer.
3. Evaluate the efficacy of various oral hygiene regimens with institutionalized, handicapped, or otherwise compromised patients.

4. Develop and test preventive measures to reduce the incidence of oral disease in special at-risk populations.

Category V: Basic/applied Sciences

1. Develop valid and reliable measures of quality dental hygiene care.
2. Assess the outcomes of client oral health self-care behaviors.
3. Develop assessment tools that provide indicators of dental hygiene care outcomes.