Philosophy Paper

Vishav Sidhu

DH 110

Ms Haris

June 18, 2024

Health is a gift given to most upon birth. As time progresses, people's health changes based on the value system embedded in them, access to information, and lack of awareness. Healthcare professionals play a crucial role in redefining or enhancing the population's understanding of health by effectively passing on accumulated knowledge. Despite the varying orthodoxies of healthcare disciplines, they all emphasize the importance of health promotion.

The way someone treats their body is indicative of the way they will take care of others, their environment and their community. Seeing the body as a garden is the best way to care for it. A garden requires water, fertilizer and sunlight, the same way that the body requires water, nutrients and sunlight. The different parts of the body work synergistically with one another, in that when one part begins to become ill it manifests throughout the body. In comparison when one fruit in the garden begins to rot, it affects the neighboring ones. The solution isn't to pick off the rotten fruit, like treating symptons, but to understand the root cause of the infection. Providing the plant with nutrition through fertilizer which promotes its health allows it to remain healthy. An unhealthy body can also be seen through a person’s oral cavity, a person who eats excess amounts of sugar is more likely to be prone to diabetes as well as have periodontal disease. “Diabetes is an important risk factor for periodontitis, and the prevalence of periodontitis is three times higher in individuals with diabetes than in those without diabetes (National Institute, 202)”. It is more likely that periodontal disease reflects unhealthy life choices rather than neglecting oral care. A client who is a daily smoker will exhibit deterioration in both oral and general health. “Periodontal disease is associated with atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, including coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, and peripheral arterial disease, although the risks are not the same for all age groups(National Institute, 202) ''.

An idea which holds true is that oral health is more influenced by life experiences rather than personal character traits. Rather than judging clients based on clinical observation a hygienist should note that each person has a unique set of experiences and circumstances which has led to a particular outcome. Not all clients are afforded the luxury to fulfill their needs which is why you must remain open minded in your thinking. Drawing on the dental hygiene human needs model, most clients who come into a dental office only when they experience pain may be due to inadequate economic resources. Drawing on the PACE philosophy it is imperative to show acceptance in circumstances where disease can appear to be solely attributed to neglect. Acknowledging that if roles were reversed, the hygienist would have the same problems as the client. In instances when clients refuse to follow practices described to them, a hygienist must accept the client will not change a particular habit so you help them deal with the symptoms until they are ready to make the change for themselves. Education should not be aimed at enforcing behavioral change but to open a client's thinking in order to reorient their value system to prioritize their health.

Oral health reflects greater systemic illnesses whose symptoms manifest in the oral cavity. Teeth tell a story about a client’s body. “Some studies have reported that periodontal disease severity tracks with rheumatoid arthritis disease activity(Bingham & Moni, 2013)”. This makes client education that much important from the standpoint of dental practitioners. “The increased focus is resulting in a deeper appreciation of the oral manifestations of rheumatoid arthritis. As a consequence, dental assessment and attention to oral hygiene assume an increasingly important part of the clinical management of rheumatoid arthritis patients(Bingham & Moni, 2013)”. Allowing clients to see how oral health and general health intersect empowers them to take consistent action to promote their oral wellbeing. It encourages them to be more proactive in setting dental appointments to monitor oral as well as general health. A hygienist should embark on a journey of continuous learning for the benefit of one self or his or her client. As a professional, the general public looks to you for your specialized knowledge and if your knowledge becomes obsolete then all you have is common knowledge. Gaining such knowledge allows a hygienist to give specific information to each patient rather than reiterating the same things from patient to patient. WHen you address specific concerns there is more likelihood of action from the client due to personal closeness to the issue. Self regulating morals should complement the ethics highlighted by regulating bodies such as CDHA and ODHA. A professional title such as dentist, doctor, hygienist should come secondary to the role you play for the community which is a health care provider. Each appointment should consist of treating the client in the way you have been professionally trained while educating the client on links between the treated area and overall health. A good healthcare provider should help the client make connections between their current problem and the underlying cause. This holistic approach aligns with the notion that the best prevention is promotion.

LITERATURE CITED

Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research 2021 Dec; Sec 2B-4.

Bingham CO, Moni M. Periodontal disease and rheumatoid arthritis: the evidence accumulates for complex pathobiologic interactions. Curr Opin Rheumatol 2013 May;25(3):345-53.

Bowen MD, Pieren JA. Darby and Walsh: Dental Hygiene Theory and Practice. Saunders Elsevier 2019 : 27-47.