

Predicting Undiagnosed Diabetes in Dental Patients

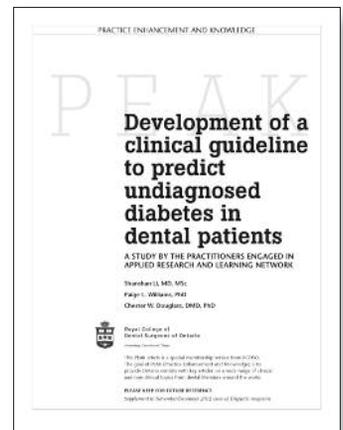
PEAK (Practice Enhancement and Knowledge) is a College service for members. The goal is to regularly provide Ontario dentists with copies of key articles on a wide range of clinical and non-clinical topics from the dental literature around the world.

It is important to note that PEAK articles may contain opinions, views or statements that are not necessarily endorsed by the College. However, PEAK is committed to providing quality material to enhance the knowledge and skills of member dentists.

D Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in Ontario and Canada. In Ontario, over 800,000 people are living with this disease and type 2 diabetes accounts for approximately 90% of all cases.

Ontario has developed and is pursuing a comprehensive diabetes strategy to assist people with diabetes and those who are at high risk of developing it. The Ontario Diabetes Strategy will achieve this by educating the public about diabetes and ways to prevent it, supporting patients in the management of their disease, and increasing professional adoption of approved practice guidelines and evidence-based care.

Recently, the province launched educational campaigns to raise public awareness of diabetes risk



factors and encourage patients to contact their health care professional in order to schedule an appointment. These risk factors include:

- being of Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian or African descent;
- being overweight – especially if most of the extra weight is carried around the middle;
- having a family history of diabetes (parent, brother or sister);
- having any health complications associated with diabetes, such as eye, nerve or kidney problems;
- giving birth to a baby weighing more than 4 kg (9 lbs);
- having gestational diabetes during pregnancy;
- having a history of impaired glucose tolerance, impaired fasting glucose or pre-diabetes;
- having high blood pressure;
- having high cholesterol or other high levels of fats in the blood.

While the diagnosis and treatment of patients with diabetes is not within the scope of practice of dentistry, dentists can play an important role by identifying patients with undiagnosed diabetes and contributing to their co-management.

With the current issue of Dispatch, PEAK is pleased to offer members the following article on this important subject: “Development of a clinical guideline to predict undiagnosed diabetes in dental patients” from the January 2011 issue of the Journal of the American Dental Association.

The article describes the authors’ systematic review of risk factors to generate a clinically useful and objectively validated guideline to predict undiagnosed diabetes in dental patients. The guideline presented is inexpensive and noninvasive, and has a sensitivity of 82.4% and a specificity of 52.8%.

The guideline is designed to assist dentists in determining whether to refer patients to their physicians or conduct a screening test in the office.

As stated by the authors, early identification of patients with undiagnosed diabetes in the dental setting can improve their oral health and overall health status by helping them avoid or reduce complications from the disease. Moreover, early treatment and control of risk factors can improve the general health status of patients with diabetes, thus reducing morbidity and health care costs.

COLLEGE CONTACT **Dr. Michael Gardner** – Manager, Quality Assurance
 416-934-5611 1-800-565-4591
 mgardner@rcdso.org