Reviewer’s report

Title: Dental sealant knowledge, opinion, values and practice of Spanish dentists

Version: 3 Date: 25 November 2012

Reviewer: Constantine Oulis

Reviewer’s report:

Answers to the authors comments

A. Globally, sealants are underutilized. Our goal was to find out why. Based on the review of the best evidence-based literature, the manner to begin to understand a clinician’s behavior is through assessment of their knowledge, opinions, values, and practice. This is what we reported on. We did not propose to correlate KOVP with actual sealant use. That is a subsequent question.

Comment:

1) this study was aimed to examine, by utilizing a new system (KOVP) and by including values as being better predictors, why sealants are underutilized.

I didn’t see in the results neither in the discussion any answer or comment regarding a) the contribution of such a new system (KOVP) on fulfilling the goals of the study and how this system stands for in comparison to the findings of other studies, and

b) whether the addition of “values” as a group or single items of questions made any difference and if not why it didn’t. In other words, the question remains. Did the new system have the power to give something more than the general statement : “Dentists in Andalusia have neutral to favourable attitudes toward sealants use”? If yes in what capacity. If no, why not...etc,

Response: In Spain there is no pediatric dental specialty. We agree, the survey was a convenience sample (Survey Method). However, we believe that the sample does reflect Andalusia’s practice pattern. Survey Andalusia GP 88% 94%

Public 12% 6%

Comment:

It was a community and Paediatric Dentistry meeting however, in which apparently Dentists mostly interested in Community and Paediatric Dentistry participated, who are more familiar with preventive methods and sealants use.

This sample it is not really representative of the population of General Dentists of Andalusia and a separation of the questionnaire between General Dentists and Dentists working with children should have been made. Studies have shown that PD are highly motivated and use sealants in much higher numbers than General Dentists. Therefore, it is biased to extrapolate the results of the study referring to General Dentists, unless you mention that in the discussion and take it into consideration for extrapolating the results.
Response: We apologize for the brief discussion, but we did not find it necessary to extend our discussion as we consider it substantial and successful in achieving our initiative. Our goal was to compare the results with other similar studies worldwide and the results were in line with those found in reviewed literature.

Comment: I meant too little in regard to how much of the discussion it is devoted to the results of the study and not how brief in length it is.

Therefore I suggest that the discussion has to be rewritten giving emphasis on what the study has found compared to other studies, the methodology used, the sampling method, the shortcomings etc.

Conclusions

Remove this sentence “This survey has two limitations. The survey did not: 1. Determine the relationship of KOVP to actual sealant use. 2. Determine the relationship of traditional KAP with KOVP” from the conclusions and elaborate about it in the discussion section.

The following paper has found that sealants are underutilized in Greece: “Prevalence of sealants in relation to dental caries on the permanent molars of 12 and 15-year-old Greek adolescents. A national pathfinder survey”, Constantine J Oulis1*, Elias D Berdouses2, Eleni Mamai-Homata3 and Argyro Polychronopoulou3 BMC Public Health 2011, 11:100

Paper #17 found that although 87,6% of Dentists claimed to believe and apply prevention only 35.8% apply sealants eventually

Response: Here we respectfully disagree with the reviewer. The key to developing a credible survey is by a comprehensive search of the literature. A reader or reviewer can use this search strategy to verify this statement. Search #1 was limited to systematic reviews of human randomized controlled trials. Search #2 was limited to surveys of on KAP regarding sealants. These statements are now included in the methods.

Comment: There is no need for the reader to verify that a comprehensive search of the literature has been conducted, as long as the authors say so and this is not the main interest of the study either.

Therefore, I propose the very descriptive section of “Literature Search” to be shortened and the 2 tables to be removed.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'