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A multi-participation model of oral health care for the students at the outlying island schools: A case study of Kinmen County Jin-Hu Junior High School

KEYWORDS

Oral health care;
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Outlying islands;
Oral examinations;
Dentists

For everyone, cultivating correct oral health concepts from an early age can have a great positive effect on maintaining oral health in the future.¹ In terms of the history of the oral examinations for the students in Taiwan, the earliest regulations on the student health examinations in Taiwan began with the Taiwan primary school children's health examination regulations in 1910, which also covered the dental examinations.² This means that the government's efforts to promote the students' oral health in Taiwan began as early as 1910. Kinmen has a special historical and geographical position for Taiwan. It became the same government system as Taiwan since 1945. It is about 10 km west of Xiamen Outer Port and about 277 km east of Taiwan Island. It is also one of the farthest outlying islands from Taiwan Island. How to effectively use resources to promote the health of the outlying island residents (especially children, adolescents, and students) has always been an issue that cannot be ignored. This article reported a multi-participation model of oral health care for the students at the outlying island schools using Kinmen County Jin-Hu Junior High School as an example.

Under this multi-participation model conducted at Kinmen County Jin-Hu Junior High School, we summarized 5 oral health protection actions for the students as follows: (A) Administrative resources providing, (B) Oral

examinations on campus, (C) Oral health education in class, (D) Teeth cleaning after meals, (E) Teeth cleaning competition, and (F) Off-campus dental treatment and response (Fig. 1). The government, dentists, and students' parents are the external support system of the campus, while the school, school nurses and teachers are the internal support system of the campus.

Generally, the oral examinations are performed once a year. The Kinmen County Education Department coordinates with the dentists in the county and assigned a dentist to enter the campus to perform the oral examinations. The school provides administrative cooperation, and the school nurses participate in assisting with the related work. The subjects are all school students, among whom the seventh-grade freshmen receive a toothbrush as a gift for meeting the dentist. If a student has any oral abnormalities (such as dental calculi deposition or dental caries), in addition to the oral examination results, the dentist will add a follow-up consultation reply slip to the examination form. The parents are asked to find time to take their children to the dental clinic for treatment, and return the follow-up consultation reply slip to the school for system login reporting. The school nurses and the teachers also play the role of reminders. Regardless of whether the students have any oral abnormalities, the school require the

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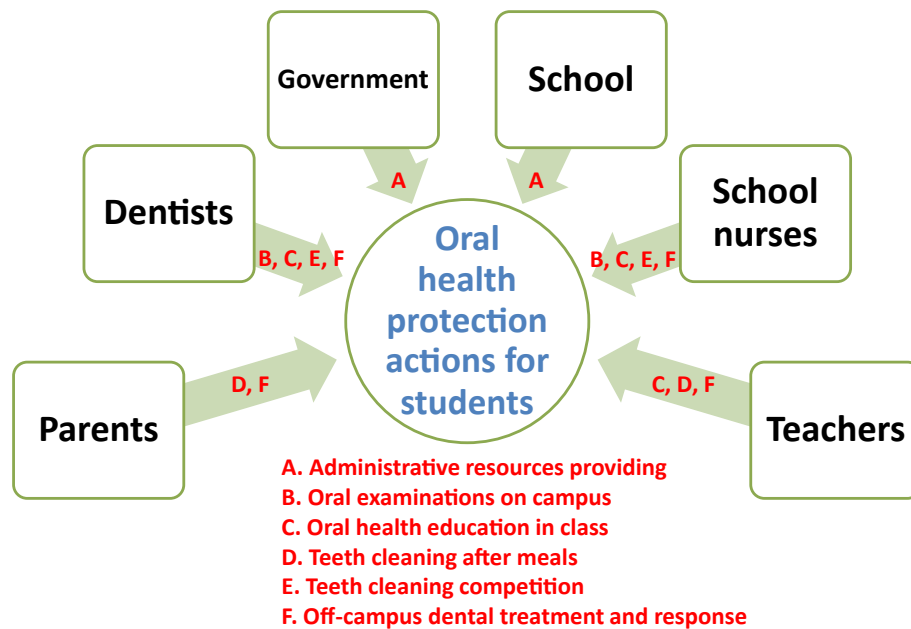


Figure 1 The framework of the multi-participation model of oral health care for the students conducted at Kinmen County Jin-Hu Junior High School.

students to go to the dental clinic for oral examinations and tooth scaling during the winter and summer vacations every year. After the school starts, the students are asked to submit their dental visit reply slips to the school. This will enable the government and the school to follow up and manage the students' oral health.

Moreover, the school holds oral health education activities from time to time, inviting the dentists to the school to give lectures, while the school nurses also conduct lectures in each class. At the same time, the teachers often promote the importance of good oral habits to their students. The school requires the students to clean their teeth after lunch at school, and the school nurses and the teachers play the role of supervisors. At the same time, the parents must also play an important role in urging their children to develop a good habit of cleaning their teeth after meals. On the other hand, the school holds a teeth cleaning competition every year to enhance the students' oral hygiene knowledge and cultivate their habit of cleaning teeth after meals and the correct way to clean teeth. The competition is guided by the school nurses. After the students have finished cleaning their teeth, they apply a dental plaque indicator (disclosing agent) and then are examined by the dentist. Through observing and learning in the competition, the students can practice the oral health care and learn from each other.

Under the education system of Taiwan, many primary and high schools provide their students with health examinations including oral health items every year or every six months, and send the examination results, requiring their students with oral abnormalities to seek the dental treatment and report their dental treatment status. The vast majority of the students follow this process, and under this system the oral health of our primary and high school students is well taken care of.³ However, there were only 20 dentists in Kinmen County in 2023, accounting for only 0.12 % of all dentists in Taiwan (20/16,285). This means that

Taiwan is facing problems and challenges in terms of uneven medical distribution and medical equality promotion.^{4,5} In terms of oral health, this multi-participation model of oral health care for the students conducted at Kinmen County Jin-Hu Junior High School is effective in promoting medical equality. It makes good use of various existing resources and replaces back-end disease treatment with front-end preventive care.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

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