Oral health is a leading health disparity in the U.S. for adults and children\(^1\), \(^2\)
Dental caries are the leading chronic illness in children\(^2\), \(^3\)
Poor children in urban & rural areas have unmet oral health needs\(^1\), \(^3\)
- Provider shortage
- Poor/no access
More than ¼ of preschoolers have at least one carious lesion prior to kindergarten\(^3\).
Topical fluoride varnish reduces childhood caries\(^1\), \(^4\)
- Inexpensive
- Effective
- Underutilized
Children b/w 0 & 6 y/o, are seen frequently for routine preventive healthcare.
It is w/in the scope of PNP practice to assess child’s oral health, apply fluoride varnish (FV) and refer as necessary\(^5\), \(^6\).
PNPs report low confidence levels for assessing oral health and applying fluoride varnish\(^5\).

**Problem Statement/Purpose**

1. Children in urban areas are at increased risk for oral disease.
2. PNP's lack training in oral health assessment & FV application.

**The purpose of this project:**
1) Determine the impact of a community based, oral health assessment and fluoride varnish application program for preschoolers.
2) Train PNP students to perform oral health assessment and FV application
3) Foster inter-professional learning opportunities between nursing and dentistry.

**Project Period:**
- May 2016 - June 2017

**Methdology/Protocol**

- FV in urban community settings is a low cost and effective way to assess oral health and refer for treatment
- Oral health assessment and practicum can easily be incorporated into PNP curriculum
- FV training will continue for RUSON PNP students

**Project Outcomes**

- Sample: 46 low income children ages 2-11 years old (25 for analysis); 7 Rutgers University 4th Yr pediatric DNP students
- Caregiver Dental Insurance
  - Yes 16 64
  - No 6 24
  - Not Answered 5 20
- Child Dental Insurance
  - Yes 16 64
  - No 5 20
  - Not Answered 4 16
- Medicaid Eligible (children)
  - Existing Dental Home (Caregiver & Child) 25 100
- Variable Frequency Percent

- White Spots (Early Caries)
  - Yes 8 32
  - No 15 60
  - Not Documented 2 8
- Caries
  - Yes 7 28
  - No 18 72
- Restoration
  - Yes 10 42
  - No 9 39
  - Not Documented 3 12
- Visible Plaque
  - Low 8 32
  - High 17 68
  - Not Documented 10 40

**Conclusion/Next Steps**

- FV in urban community settings is a low cost and effective way to assess oral health and refer for treatment
- Oral health assessment and practicum can easily be incorporated into PNP curriculum
- FV training will continue for RUSON PNP students

**Leadership Journey**

- Setting: Community preschools in Newark, NJ
- PNP, BSN students, dental students and dental residents worked together during community health fairs to perform oral health assessments and education.