



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DENTISTRY
ANNUAL REPORT: COMMUNITY ORAL HEALTH OUTREACH
PROGRAM (COHOP)
2023



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Introduction

The School of Oral Health Sciences (SOHS) Community Oral Health Outreach Program (COHOP) aims to communicate its objectives, skills, and practices to target communities to raise awareness about and promote oral health. In the communities that the COHOP serves, countless individuals do not have direct access to oral health care services, nor can they afford oral care products such as toothpaste and toothbrushes. The oral health staff and students of the Community Dentistry and Oral Hygiene and Dental Therapy department offer care in the form of relief of pain and sepsis, health promotion, education, screening, primary and secondary preventative care, and guidance on oral care product usage. Furthermore, the oral hygiene and education aids that we provide to our patients are shared amongst family members, thus improving the prioritisation of dental health in the household.

The COHOP also supports student training through the community-based service learning approach.

We have received favourable feedback from the various healthcare facilities, organisations, schools and communities who have benefitted from the programs. The outreach departments are encouraged by the positive contribution that the staff and students continue to make in society, and we remain dedicated to continuing our efforts to reach more individuals who may not otherwise have access to oral health services.

The staff who coordinated and facilitated the outreach programs must be commended for a successful year of training, research, and service delivery.

This report will highlight COHOP's activities for 2023.

Acknowledgements

Community Oral Health Outreach Program in 2023 marked a significant milestone as it successfully resumed services to most communities after the disruptions caused by COVID-19.

The collaborative efforts of students, teachers, trainers, and assisting staff played a pivotal role in ensuring the seamless execution of our programs. This achievement wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of our staff at the School of Oral Health and Wits Oral Health Centre: Special thanks to Professor Malele-Kolisa, Dr Mushungwa, Mrs Ralephenya, Dr Mahlomoje, Dr Thekiso, Mr Thomas Mpfuni, Mrs Molopyane, Ms Modisha, Mr Makhubele, Ms Phakela, Ms Mokale, Mr Madonsela, Dr Netshiombo and Dr Vava; our administration staff Ms Ndhlovu and Ms Marule. Additional thanks to our part-time Mrs Kearney, Dr Moolla, Dr Sibanyoni and Dr Mashiyimbyi.

Special thanks of support to our sponsors - Haleon and Colgate and appreciation for the continued partnership with the Provincial and District Departments of Health, in Gauteng.

Community Oral Health Outreach Programs (COHOP)

Diepsloot Oral Health Outreach Program (DOHOP)



The Community Dentistry department marked the 10th anniversary of DOHOP at the O.R Tambo Clinic, in Diepsloot; a remarkable milestone and testament to the enduring commitment to community well-being. As we celebrate this significant anniversary, we reflect on the impact your generous contributions have made.

The strategic partnership between the clinic and our department has been at the forefront of providing essential primary care services to the Diepsloot community through the mobile dental truck.



The DOHOP has played a pivotal role in addressing oral health needs by providing emergency, preventative and curative services for thousands of people since 2013. The need of relieve of pain and sepsis surpasses the promotion efforts and there are several strides made. We hope to enhance the staff compliment to concentrate to primary preventive services.

Although curative services were discontinued on Saturdays, the mobile truck has remained a steadfast resource, operating four days a week to deliver critical care services (Figure 1).

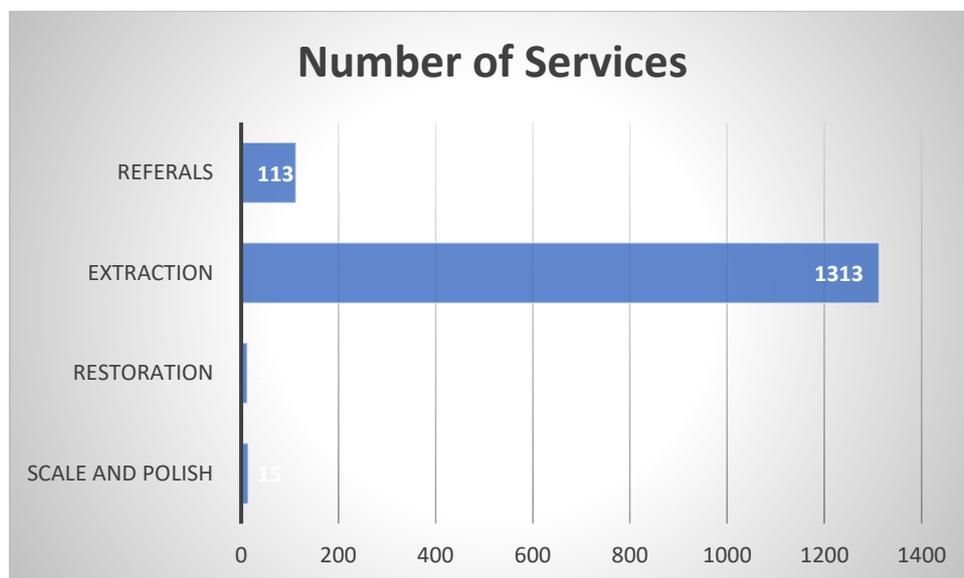


Figure 1 DOHOP service delivery

One of the program's key accomplishments lies in its commitment to education and training. Our dedicated clinicians have not only provided crucial care but have also contributed to the

training of the next generation of dental professionals. Students are actively involved in service delivery, gaining invaluable experience in community-based service systems. The hands-on exposure is to ensure that they develop a holistic understanding of oral health in diverse environments, further enriching their education.

Oral Health Paediatric Virology Project (OHPVP)

The OHPVP services have experienced ongoing success, where clinical services, led by both dedicated clinicians and oral health students, persist in offering essential oral health care. The Paeds Virology Project remains a vital resource, providing co-location services specifically designed for HIV-positive children and youth.

While our commitment to delivering high-quality care remains steadfast, the Paediatric Virology Unit has experienced a reduction in patient numbers, and this has directly impacted the scope of services we can offer within the program. We are, however, pleased to share a positive development: the acquisition of a mobile digital x-ray, a valuable addition that will enhance our ability to make definitive diagnoses and deliver more comprehensive care.

The support from the Paediatric Virology staff continues to be a driving force behind our efforts. Despite challenges, we are determined to maintain our relationships and expand our services to benefit other vulnerable paediatric patients in Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital.

Yeoville Boys School

Yeoville Boys Primary School, located in Frances Yeoville, Johannesburg, caters to approximately 1600 students.

The school's administration has recognised the challenges of health-related absenteeism and the urgent need for dental services among their students, who have limited or no access to essential dental care.

Some challenges were faced by the school and the Department of Oral Hygiene and Dental Therapy (OH-DT). Dental services were reinstated for Grades five and six students, including

screenings and treatment, following the school being placed under departmental care in 2016. Changes in the OH-DT department outreach schedule, coupled with power outages and academic program conflict at the school affected the frequency and timing of service delivery.

In total, 170 grade seven students were screened, with 71 students receiving various treatments (figure 3)

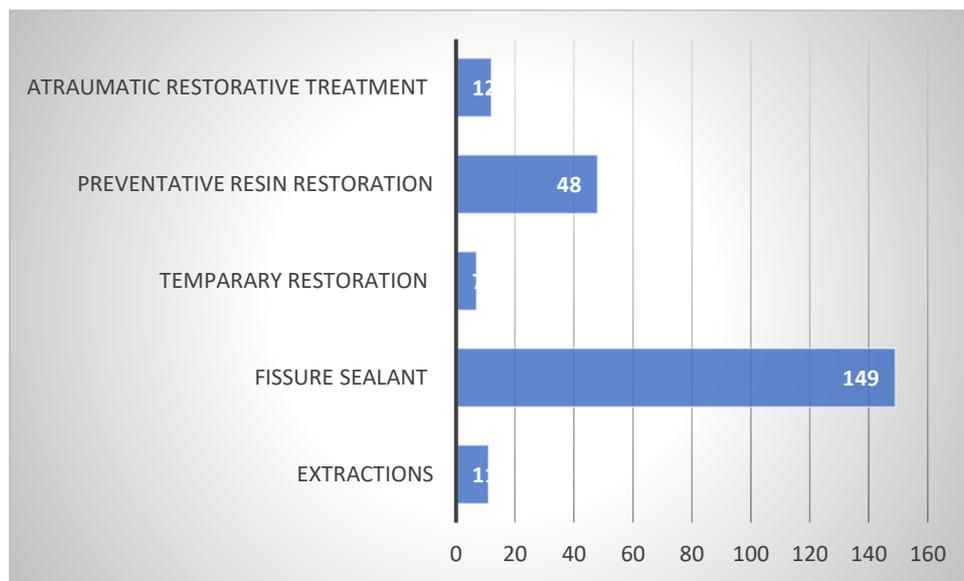


Figure 2 Yeoville Boys High School Service Delivery

Community-Based Learning

Bachelor of Dental Sciences (BDS), Year 1

As part of the Community Dentistry BDS I teaching and learning program, students are expected to take some of their in-class learning out into the community. The students are expected to implement situational analysis approaches in real-life settings and conduct and experience oral health screening for dental caries.

BDS I students are expected to demonstrate competency in conducting oral health education and promotion. As such an opportunity to conduct health education and promotion in the community is invaluable. This is all to enhance the learning experience and develop their knowledge and skills.



The students visited a high school in Berea (Barnato High School), where they delivered Health Promotion Talks to approximately 300 Grade 9 pupils on various healthcare topics that intersect with oral health. These learners were provided with toothbrushes (Sensodyne) and toothpaste (Aquafresh). The additional classes were not physically visited; due to time scheduling constraints; got health promotion material each with toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste, and 900 learners were given material.



In September 2023, the dental students presented a creative and age-appropriate oral health talk for learners at five ECD centres in Yeoville, Johannesburg. As part of this ECD outreach event, the learners (440 learners) received interactive oral health education aids, toothbrushes and toothpaste sponsored by Colgate.

Bachelor of Dental Sciences (BDS), Year 4&5

To bridge the gap in healthcare accessibility, fourth and fifth-year dental students engage in community outreach in Diepsloot - a disadvantaged township. The experience is supposed to transcend textbooks and classrooms, exposing students to the realities faced by underserved populations. The students provide much-needed dental care and education to those who often fall through the crevices of the healthcare system. This invaluable experience fosters a deeper understanding of social determinants of health, instilling a lifelong commitment to service and equity in these future practitioners.



Bachelor of Oral Health Sciences (BOHSc), Year 2

BOHSc II students engaged in an oral health education and promotion outreach program. A group went to St Martin Catholic Pre-school in Wynberg, Sandton, where the students provided oral health education, including toothbrushing techniques, to the learners (87). Another group provided the same outreach services to children at CMJAH paediatric wards (42).

In both programs, the learners and young patients were provided with toothpaste and toothbrushes.

Bachelor of Oral Health Sciences (BOHSc), Year 3

The outreach project at Casa do Sol School continued in 2023 to offer BOHSc III students a service-learning teaching platform. It provided a valuable opportunity for the BOHSc III (Oral Hygiene) students to enhance their clinical skills and learn to provide oral hygiene management for paediatric patients with special needs. Students gained experience in managing children with special needs and collaborating with other health professionals, such as Speech and Hearing Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Nurses, Biokineticists, and Physiotherapists. Additionally, the students presented clinical case studies from the school as part of their Fundamentals in Oral Health III (OHSC3006A) course to all BOHSc students and staff members in the SOHS, providing samples and educational materials for the teachers and learners at the school.

School of Oral Health Sciences Events

Oral Health Month 2023-September



The School of Oral Health Sciences (SOHS), led by the Dental Science Council, commemorated South African Oral Health Day in September 2023. The theme aligned with the Gauteng Department of Health Oral Health Month slogan, "No health without oral health," to encourage individuals to prioritize oral health as part of their overall well-being. The event was promoted via the university's official social media platforms and distributed via email to SOHS students and staff. The DSC participated in an interview about the event on VOW FM.

The event took place at Wits East Campus and Wits Medical School, where 1407 students and staff were screened by SOHS students under the supervision of Oral Hygienists, Dental Therapists, and Dentists from the Community Dentistry Department.



Figure 3 BOHSc III students screening in West Campus

Many patients screened exhibited dental caries and gingivitis, emphasizing the importance of focusing on oral disease prevention and health promotion. Patients received tailored oral health education, guidance based on diagnostic findings, referrals for treatment, and complimentary samples of toothpaste and informational pamphlets.

The event was a success, with DSC leading the initiative supported by the Community

Dentistry department. An article regarding the event and oral health initiatives was published in the Daily Sun.

BOHSc I Students Exhibition Wits Oral Health Centre Entrance

During September, BOHSc I students organized an exhibition at the Wits Oral Health Centre as part of their communication assessment. They created posters on various oral health topics, including periodontal diseases, dental caries, smoking cessation, nutrition and diet counselling, prevention, and non-carious lesions. Students offered oral hygiene education and instructions to participants passing the WOHC, educating 250 participants by providing pamphlets and tubes of toothpaste.

Screening and Testing Programme by Pharmacy Students (STEPPS) Project

Second and third-year Bachelor of Oral Health Sciences (BOHSc) students engaged in Inter-Professional Education by collaborating with Pharmacy students to conduct oral hygiene screening and education for 967 participants.



They contributed to the Screening and Testing Programme by Pharmacy Students (STEPPS) project, organizing screening events for HIV and cardiovascular risk factors across various

university campuses, including the Main Campus, Education Campus, and Health Sciences Campus. Samples and educational materials were distributed to students, staff, and visitors participating in the screening programs.

Child Protection Week



Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital partook in the National Child Protection Week. The theme for this year's campaign was 'Let us Protect Children during COVID-19-19 and Beyond'. The hospital's 'Teddy Bear' clinic invited the departments of Community Dentistry, and Oral Hygiene and Dental Therapy to participate by providing oral health awareness.

The staff and junior dental students provided general oral health and awareness of child harm signs and symptoms. 550 children and 230 caregivers were reached.

Gauteng Department of Health Oral Health Outreach – Alexandra

Responding to an invitation by the Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Ms. Nomantu Ralehloko, the Department of Community Dentistry collaborated with Johannesburg Metro Oral Health Services to organize an outreach event in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg.



This initiative was part of the MEC's broader outreach health programs aimed at improving access to healthcare services in historically underserved areas.

During the event, oral health staff conducted 99 screenings. Community members visiting the mobile truck and oral health stands received oral health education and toothbrushing aids. Those in need of further treatment were referred to the Wits Oral Health Centre.

Gauteng Department of Health – Serve with a Smile campaign



On November 17, 2023, the Gauteng Department of Health launched its "I Serve with a Smile Campaign" to address increasing complaints by enhancing staff attitudes, boosting morale, and improving service delivery. As part of the launch, the Wits Community Dentistry Department provided oral health education and screening services to attendees from public health facilities and communities across Gauteng Province.

Research Activities

Conferences

International Association of Dental Research (IADR)

The South African division of the IADR hosted the 52nd scientific meeting in Cape Town. Colleagues from the departments of Community Dentistry, and Oral Hygiene and Dental Therapy were in attendance. Colleagues presented research and abstracts on various topics including HIV-related Oral Health-related Quality of Life, Clinical Governance and e-Learning.



The following research projects were presented:

1. Moolla A., A, Ralephenya T.R.M.D., Bhat A., Molopyane L.N., Padayachee S., Khamissa R., Yengopal V. High risk behaviours pertaining to oral disease and

malignancies by HIV status at a tertiary hospital in South Africa. International Association of Dental Research. Oral. 52nd IADR SA Division Scientific Meeting and AGM 7th, 8th September 2023.

2. Mothupi K.A., Sodo P.P., Tshite K., Ralephenya T.R.M.D. Learning Style Preferences of Oral Health Sciences Students at the University of the Witwatersrand. Oral. 52nd IADR SA Division Scientific Meeting and AGM 7th, 8th September 2023.
3. Ralephenya T.R.M.D., Malele-Kolisa Y., Sodo P.P., Kearney A, Mtyongwe D, Nordström M., Lindmark U. Oral health awareness and behavioural factors of caries-free patients. Oral. 52nd IADR SA Division Scientific Meeting and AGM 7th, 8th September 2023.
4. Kotsane DF., Ralephenya T.R.M.D., Mothupi K.A., Malau C.B., and Molepo J. Oral Health Sciences student's insight on clinical teaching and supervision at an academic institution. Poster. 52nd IADR SA Division Scientific.

Journal Publications

1. Y Malele-Kolisa. Unpacking the NHI Bill recently passed by parliament in May 2023: Implications for oral health. South African Dental Journal 78 (09), 467-468; 2023 IMPACT FACTOR 0.0094
2. J Murererehe, Y Malele-Kolisa, F Niragire, V Yengopal. Periodontal disease and associated risk factors among people living with HIV and HIV-negative adults in Rwanda: a comparative cross-sectional study. PAMJ Clinical Medicine. 2023; 11:43. Published on 20 Feb IMPACT FACTOR 0.283,
3. Murererehe, J., Malele-Kolisa, Y., Niragire, F. and Yengopal, V., 2023. Prevalence of dental caries and associated risk factors among People Living with HIV/AIDS and HIV uninfected adults at an HIV clinic in Kigali, Rwanda. Plos one, 18(4), p.e0276245. IMPACT FACTOR 3.752
4. Molete MP, Malele-Kolisa Y, Thekiso MD, Lang A, Kong A, George A. The role of Community Health Workers in promoting oral health at school settings: A scoping review Introduction and Background. (2023)
5. Malele-Kolisa Y, Netshiombo NV, Mpfuni T, Ralephenya TRDM. Prevalence of oral impacts on daily-performance among HIV-adolescents, Johannesburg, South Africa SADJ April 2023, Vol.79 No. 3 p137-144. IMPACT FACTOR 0.0094

Conclusion

Community Oral Health Outreach Program in 2023 marked a significant milestone as it successfully resumed services to most communities after the disruptions caused by COVID-19. The collaborative efforts of students, teachers, trainers, and assisting staff played a pivotal role in ensuring the seamless execution of our programs. This achievement wouldn't have been possible without the unwavering support of sponsors and facility administrators in the communities we serve, highlighting the importance of collective commitment in promoting oral health and well-being.