

Improving the Quality of Dentistry (IQuaD): a cluster factorial randomised controlled trial comparing the effectiveness and cost-benefit of oral hygiene advice and/or periodontal instrumentation with routine care for the prevention and management of periodontal disease in dentate adults attending dental primary care

Craig R Ramsay,^{1*} Jan E Clarkson,² Anne Duncan,¹
Thomas J Lamont,³ Peter A Heasman,⁴
Dwayne Boyers,⁵ Beatriz Goulão,¹ Debbie Bonetti,²
Rebecca Bruce,¹ Jill Gouick,² Lynne Heasman,⁴
Laura A Lovelock-Hempleman,² Lorna E Macpherson,²
Giles I McCracken,⁴ Alison M McDonald,¹
Fiona McLaren-Neil,² Fiona E Mitchell,²
John DT Norrie,¹ Marjon van der Pol,⁵ Kirsty Sim,²
James G Steele,⁴ Alex Sharp,⁴ Graeme Watt,²
Helen V Worthington⁶ and Linda Young⁷

¹Health Services Research Unit, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK

²Dental Health Services Research Unit, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK

³Dundee Dental School, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK

⁴The Dental School, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

⁵Health Economics Research Unit, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK

⁶The School of Dentistry, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

⁷NHS Education for Scotland, Edinburgh, UK

*Corresponding author c.r.ramsay@abdn.ac.uk

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

Almost half of adults in the UK show signs of gum disease. It is a largely preventable disease, with treatment usually taking the form of self-care, including tooth brushing and dentist cleaning, which is often called 'scale and polish'. In this study, we wanted to find out whether or not the advice patients are given and the cleaning they receive from the dentist work and offer good value for money.

A total of 1877 adults who regularly attended 63 different NHS dental practices across Scotland and north-east England were involved. The adults had early signs of gum disease and were randomly chosen to be offered a scale and polish every 6 months, every 12 months or not at all. They received normal advice or personalised advice depending on what dental practice they attended. The recruited adults completed study surveys every year. They also had clinical measurements of their mouth taken by study staff at the start of the study and 3 years later.

After 3 years, there was no evidence of differences in gum health, whether a scale and polish was carried out every 6 or 12 months or only when either the patient requested it or the dentist recommended it for clinical reasons. There was also no added benefit of providing personalised oral health advice. However, patients value, and are willing to pay for, cleaning advice and scale and polish, but are willing to pay more for scale and polish than for advice.

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This report

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