
Sammanfattning

BACKGROUND: The authors conducted a study to investigate whether general private dental practitioners in Sweden could identify patients at risk of experiencing a fatal outcome of cardiovascular disease (CVD) within a set time frame and to what extent those practitioners' findings would result in medical interventions. METHODS: The authors enrolled 200 patients who met the following inclusion criteria: age of 45 years or older; no history of or use of medications for hypertension, hypercholesterolemia or diabetes; and having had no visits to a health care professional during the preceding 12 months during which glucose levels, total cholesterol levels or blood pressure had been assessed. The participating dentists and their staff members used a computerized system, HeartScore (European Society of Cardiology, Sophia Antipolis, France), to calculate the risk, in percentages, of a patient's dying as a result of a CVD event within the next 10 years. Dentists advised patients with HeartScores of 10 percent or higher to seek medical advice. After six to 12 months, one of the authors conducted structured telephone interviews to ascertain the results of the medical referrals. RESULTS: Six percent of the participants, all men (n = 12), had
HeartScores of 10 percent or higher. No woman had a HeartScore higher than 5 percent. Fifty percent of the identified patients (n = 6) with a HeartScore of 10 percent or higher received prescriptions for antihypertensive medications after undergoing an evaluation by a medical care provider. For three patients, the physician was not able to confirm the dentists’ assessment and took no further action. CONCLUSIONS: Oral health care professionals can identify patients who are unaware of their risk of developing serious complications as a result of CVD and who are in need of medical intervention. The authors’ findings suggest the need for more studies with larger sample populations.