HEALTH CAMPAIGN IN DERMOPHARMACY:

"Healthy mouth, happy children"

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Introduction

The General Spanish Council of Pharmacists, via the Dermopharmacy Committee, and with the collaboration of Laboratorios PHB, Oraldine Junior and Sanitas, is introducing an educational Campaign to be conducted by pharmacists “Healthy mouth, happy children” with the acknowledgement of health interest from the Ministry of Health and Consumption.

The Campaign seeks to educate children on the need for proper oral hygiene in order to avoid future problems when they become adults.

Pharmacists will be going to schools to teach children the correct rules for oral hygiene in order to prevent the pathologies associated with lack of care: caries and periodontal diseases.

The reason behind this Campaign lies in one of the priority objectives of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The maximum incidence of caries occurs in infancy, affecting half of all children at the age of 5, and more than 90% of adolescents at the age of 15.

Also, together with dental caries, periodontal disease is one of the pathologies of the mouth that is most common in Spain, given that 68% of children display gingivitis.

According to the Spanish Dental Foundation, in the year 2001, the maximum incidence of caries occurs in the 7 to 12 years-old age bracket, affecting 70% of the children in this age bracket.

The Campaign was presented to provincial members of the Dermopharmacy Committee in May 2004 in a special section devoted to this Campaign. Additional documentation and interesting links can also be consulted there.

Material and methods

Specific material has been produced for achieving success in the target population of the Campaign, which are children aged 6 to 12, their families and the pharmacists who are going to carry out actions in schools. This material consists of:

- Poster setting out the basic design of the Campaign. This facilitates advertising of the Campaign and its presentation to the communications media.
- Guide for the pharmacist. This booklet sets out the didactic contents to be used in the instruction sessions in schools.
- Video. This lasts for 10 minutes and its contents consist of:
  - The formation process
  - Structure of teeth
  - Problem related with lack of oral hygiene
  - Basic advice for good hygiene
- Activities notebook. Two different types of notebook have been produced according to the age bracket: 6-7 and 8-12. They contain activities and games which facilitate an understanding of the basic concepts of correct oral hygiene. Those contents vary as they can be adapted to the age of the child:
  1. Notebook for children aged 6-7
     - Oral and tooth foods for the teeth
     - Concepts of anatomy
     - Concepts of oral hygiene
     - Learning about mouthwashes and the toothbrush
     - Evaluation survey or test
  2. Notebook for children aged 8-12
     - Anatomy of the mouth
     - Proper hygiene - dietary measures
     - Overview of brushing
     - Evaluation survey or test
- Leaflet. Information which the children can take to their families and which includes a series of basic concepts, conceived so that parents can participate in introducing healthy habits as part of their responsibilities for their children.
- Internet Portal. All these materials are to be found in the portal of the General Spanish Council of Pharmacists, www.portalfarma.com, in a special section devoted to this Campaign. Additional documentation and interesting links can also be consulted there.

Results

Training

The Campaign was presented to provincial members of the Dermopharmacy Committee in the headquarters of the General Spanish Council of Pharmacists. Participating pharmacists then attended a training session held by the coordinator responsible for the Campaign in each province, which enabled them to boost their knowledge of oral health, together with the guide for the pharmacist.

Participation

In an initial phase, the Campaign was conducted in 34 Spanish provinces during the months of May and June, with action on over 10,000 children, with the participation of 835 pharmacists.

Later on, the Campaign is going to be conducted in a further six provinces during October of this year. With this expansion, a total of 115,000 children is expected to be reached with the participation of 1,100 pharmacists.

Evaluation

Once actions in schools have been completed, an evaluation will be made of the surveys conducted in the schools in order to thereby learn the current situation of the infant population in hygiene-dietary habits and to assess the impact which the Campaign has had on children.

Conclusions

The aim of this Campaign is to:

- Promote the training of pharmacists in oral hygiene.
- Make children more aware of the need for correct oral hygiene.
- Acknowledge the social work of the pharmacist.
- Value the involvement of the pharmacist as a health promoter.
- Learn about the current situation of children in terms of proper habits in oral hygiene.

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