

## Oral Health Related Quality of Life in Adolescents

J.E. Johnson<sup>1</sup>, W.G. Wright<sup>1</sup>, S.E. Rich<sup>1</sup>, L. Reátegui-Sharpe<sup>1</sup>, R.I. Garcia<sup>1</sup>, A. Spiro III<sup>2</sup>, J.A. Jones<sup>1</sup> – <sup>1</sup>Boston University School of Dental Medicine, Boston, MA, <sup>2</sup>Boston University School of Public Health, Boston, MA

Objectives: There are Oral Health-related Quality of Life (OHQoL) measures for adults and children but few comparable instruments for adolescents. This project presents descriptive data from a pilot study of a self-reported oral health-related quality of life instrument designed for use among teens (TOHQOL). Methods: We collected data in a convenience sample of teens (13-17 years old) attending the Boston University dental clinics. The TOHQOL consisted of 32 items (gleaned from focus groups) with a 5-point scale assessing symptoms, physical functioning, social functioning, psychological well-being and oral health perceptions.

Results: The sample (n=67) consisted of 56% Black, 30% White, 11% Hispanic, and 3% Asian teen; average age was 14.9 years ( $\pm 1.24$ ) and 45% were female. 83% rated their oral health as excellent/very good/good, 17% as fair. They were also asked to describe their oral health status compared to a year ago: 20% reported their oral health as much better, 23% somewhat better, 53% about the same and 4% somewhat worse. While no or reported their oral health as poor, many teens reported problems from oral conditions. The most commonly experienced items by domain were as follows: *Symptoms* (60% pain, 48% bad breath, 39% bleeding gums, and 35% mouth sores); *Physical Functioning* (49% trouble with hot and/or cold foods, 44% trouble eating the food they wanted to eat, 35% trouble with hard foods; *Social Functioning* (30% not wanting to smile/laugh around others).

Conclusion: These results suggest that oral health conditions have an impact on the daily lives of teens.

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