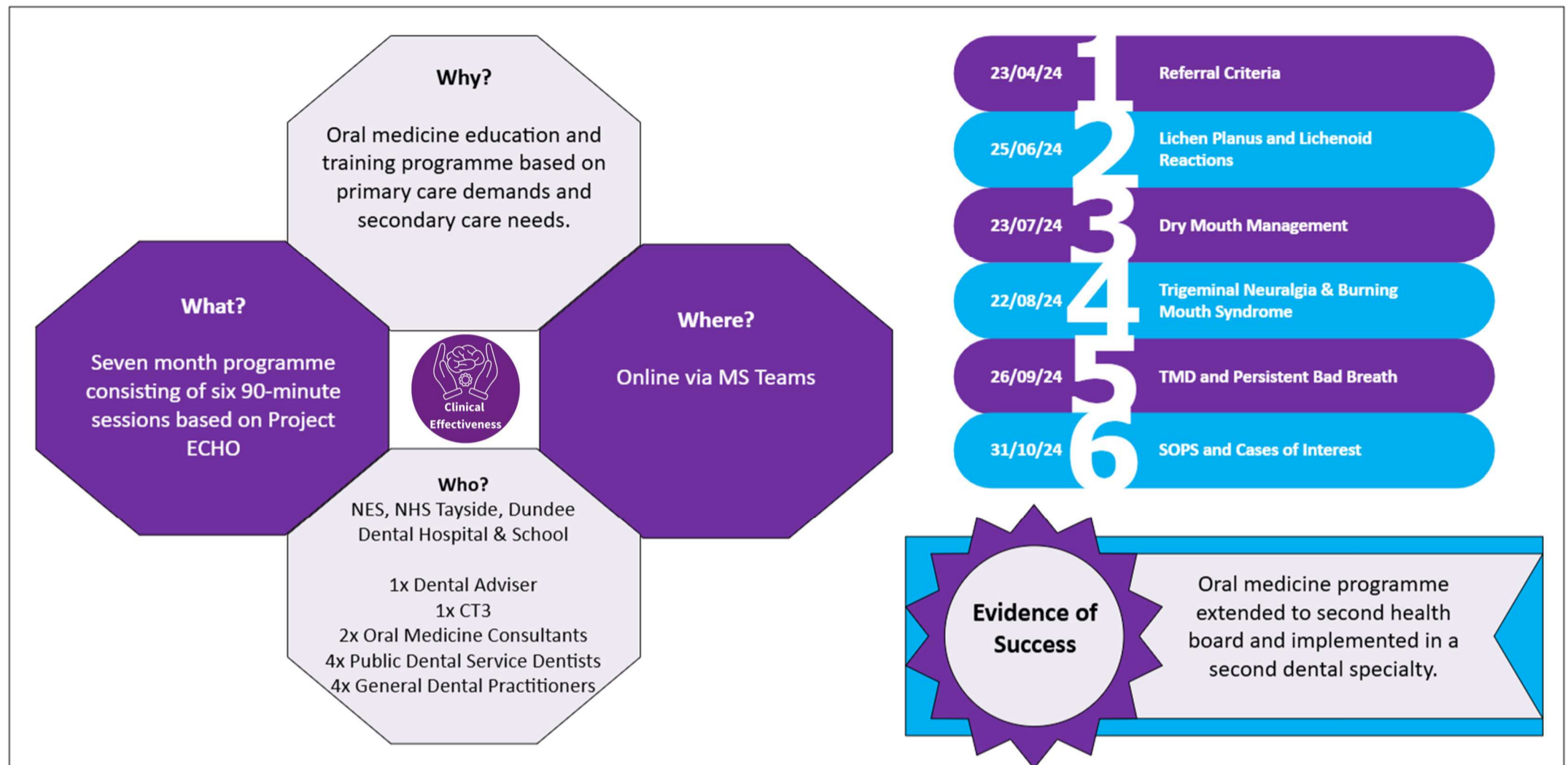


NES Dental Oral Medicine Education and Training Programme Pilot

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Background

Oral medicine is the specialty of dentistry concerned with the diagnosis and management of adult and child patients with chronic recurrent and medically related disorders of the mouth, face, and jaws. Stakeholder data identified oral medicine as priority area to upskill in primary care due to the demands of the primary care workforce and the needs of secondary care. High referral numbers, limited specialists and secondary care settings available to patients with oral medicine concerns result in long waiting times. This initiative tackles health inequalities by educating primary care clinicians in conditions that they can manage effectively allowing the patients that need secondary care management to be cared from more efficiently.

Aim

The NES Dental Oral Medicine Education and Training Programme (OMETP) aims to improve patient care through delivery of a novel education and training initiative designed to enhance the oral medicine knowledge and skills of the dental primary care workforce.

Methods

The OMETP pilot was conducted in partnership with NES, NHS Tayside and Dundee Dental Hospital and School during 2024.

OMETP delivers sustainable online education and training based on Project ECHO's "all teach all learn collaborative problem solving" model <https://projectecho.unm.edu/>

With oral medicine consultants' knowledge experts, OMETP comprises small group teaching followed by peer case-based learning supported by specialist-led best practice guidance. OMETP is delivered over a longitudinal time frame promoting a ripple effect of learning.

Evaluation was incorporated throughout including pre-training interviews and questionnaire feedback during and post-training plus continual evaluative dialogue and connection with the group.

Questionnaire data was gathered anonymously using Microsoft forms. The evaluation framework was underpinned by the Kirkpatrick Model (<https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/the-kirkpatrick-model/>).

Results

Results are presented using the four levels of the Kirkpatrick model:

Reaction: participants were satisfied, enjoyed the programme and felt it relevant to their role.

Learning: participants gained new knowledge and consolidated their professional practice.

Behaviour: participants reported the programme has and would likely change their professional practice.

Results: participants gained confidence, improved relationships with secondary care, some reduced their referral numbers. The consultants leading on the programme reported an improvement on the quality of referrals and sensible primary care interventions prior to secondary care referral.

Conclusion

This pilot has provided robust evidence on how best this model of learning can be utilised to improve patient's dental care and tackle inequalities. OMETP is being expanded to a second health board and is also being implemented in an oral surgery initiative commencing February 2025.

References: Project ECHO The University of New Mexico Health Sciences <https://projectecho.unm.edu/> Scottish Government (2018). *Oral Health Improvement Plan*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government

Acknowledgements: We wish to thank the oral medicine consultants, the participants, NHS Tayside's DoD & PDS clinical director and NES business support