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94 Caries risk assessment by Dutch dental students

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Objectives: Individual caries risk assessment (CRA) is essential for targeted caries management at both preventive and therapeutic levels. This study explores the knowledge and use of CRA by Dutch dental students.

Methods: A total of 213 fifth-year dental students from three dental schools in the Netherlands (Amsterdam (n=119), Groningen (n=44) and Nijmegen (n=50)) were invited to participate. Data was collected using a survey.

Results: This survey was completed by 118 students (55%). All respondents reported using CRA on a regular basis, although only part of them reported applying it on both primary/mixed and permanent dentitions (Amsterdam 67% vs. Groningen 45% vs. Nijmegen 86%; $\chi^2=18.671$, $p\leq 0.001$). Almost all respondents tailored the frequency of dental visits (96%) and preventive strategies (99%) based on CRA, while 18% of them indicated not to base individual treatment plans on CRA. Oral hygiene, diet as well as active and recent carious lesions were considered as the most important factors in CRA for all patients, regardless of their age (no statistical differences among schools). The interest for continuing education on CRA significantly differed among the three schools (Amsterdam 47% vs. Groningen 61% vs. Nijmegen 24%; $\chi^2=14.597$, $p=0.006$). Students that did not use CRA in all patient groups were more likely to express an interest for continuing education on CRA ($\chi^2=3.928$, $p=0.047$).

Conclusions: Dutch dental students report a rather similar knowledge on CRA between schools. However, the recently intensified collaboration between the dental schools could homogenize the training of dental students even further.

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