

Scientific Research Paper Abstract Example

Abstract:

An Assessment of Oral Health on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation

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We assessed the oral health of the Pine Ridge Oglala Lakota people, described a new oral health assessment tool for Indigenous people, and suggested ways to improve Native oral health. The Check Up Study team of dentist and dental hygienists performed examinations of teeth and oral soft tissue for a convenience sample of 292 adults and children. Screening personnel counted the number of decayed, filled, sealed and total teeth, used probes to measure periodontal disease, and screened for oral lesions. Half of adults had 27 or fewer teeth. Sixteen percent of adults had at least one tooth with a pocket depth > 6mm. Participants had higher numbers of decayed teeth ($p < 0.0001$), and lower numbers of filled teeth ($p < 0.0001$) than those reflected in Indian Health Service cross-tribe aggregated data from 1999. Amongst Lakota people of Pine Ridge, our study documented a high prevalence of caries and periodontal disease, numerous people with missing teeth, and many unmet dental needs. Future studies of oral health related behaviors, and access to oral health care are needed to explain the dental, periodontal, and soft tissue problems that adversely affect the Oglala Lakota.