

TITLE: THE IMPACT OF ACTIVE METHODOLOGIES IN THE AWARENESS OF DENTAL STUDENTS ON THEIR ROLE IN COMBATING STIs

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ABSTRACT:

With the increase in the prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), it is becoming increasingly necessary to raise awareness about these pathologies. In this context, the concern with the training of health professionals is relevant to make sure they are prepared to deliver adequate diagnosis and treatment. Dentists play an important role in identifying patients with STIs, since many of these diseases have early oral manifestations. Thus, the increasing prevalence of STIs justifies closer attention to the training of health professionals, an objective that can be achieved by using active teaching-learning methodologies focused on the development of critical thinking with an eye to social reality and problems. This work's goal is to evaluate the impact of the teaching methodology "Adopt a Bacteria" as it is applied in a Dentistry class for learning the biology of bacteria that causes STIs. The target class was divided into groups, each one responsible for discussing a bacterial genus via an online forum on Facebook. Among these groups, two of them worked with genera associated with STIs: *Neisseria* and *Treponema*, related to gonorrhoea and syphilis, respectively. At the end of the discussions, it was possible to perceive a distinct pattern between the posts of these two groups. We noticed greater emphasis was given to pathology and virulence factors, mostly with regard to bacteria related to oral health. However, the group that worked with the genus *Neisseria* addressed more issues associated with antibiotic resistance; while the *Treponema* group directed towards epidemiological questions. Although each of the groups leaned towards different topics, all discussions sought to bring the topics closer to the dental practice. The groups also presented a seminar about their bacterial genus. The way each seminar was conducted approached the way each group has discussed on the internet. Despite the differences, the groups made clear during the seminars the relevance of the dentist's role in the prevention and diagnosis of these two STIs and were aware of the impact that such diseases can have on society. Thus, it was possible to perceive that the activity was successful in creating a propitious environment to discussion and reflection on topics in microbiology and how these topics can impact our society.

Keywords: Active Learning; Gonorrhoea; Odontology; STIs; Syphilis.

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