

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE
RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

**Barriers to Primary Dental Care:
A Qualitative Investigation of Attenders to a
Dental School Emergency Department**

Vinicius Tavares

Objective:

To identify factors that influence patients' decision to visit a dental emergency department for treatment, instead of preventive and primary dental care services.

Background:

Data show that more than 40% of the United States population does not visit a dentist regularly. In addition, individuals from ethnic minorities and lower socio-economic groups are less likely to use preventive dental services. As a result, patients rely on emergency dental services as their only source of dental care. An average of 738,000 visits to emergency services for complaints of tooth pain or tooth injury happens yearly. To develop new strategies and policies, this population needs to be better understood regarding their characteristics, and the barriers they face in using preventive services instead of dental emergency departments.

Methods:

Using a social ecological framework to inform the study design, we will conduct a qualitative study using in-depth interviews to gain new insights into how environmental and individual factors operate together resulting in dental emergency department visits for care.

Committee Chair:

Nancy P. Chin, PhD, MPH

Committee Members:

Yan-Fang Ren, DDS, PhD

Peter J. Veazie, MS, PhD

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

12:00PM – 12:30 PM

Helen Wood Hall, Room 4W301

EVERYONE IS WELCOME