Extern Rotation Journal (Sample Student Assignment)

CHC Lynnwood

DHYG 425: Community Dental Health II

1/19/2025

During my two-day extern rotation at CHC Lynnwood, I had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of patients, providing dental hygiene services to those from underserved populations. On the first day, I saw five patients, and on the second day, I treated three patients. This experience allowed me to reflect on the importance of cultural sensitivity, empathy, and adaptability in clinical practice.

One of the key aspects of my interactions was ensuring respect and inclusivity for patients from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Many of my patients had limited English proficiency, which presented challenges in communication. To overcome this, I used simple language, visual aids, and nonverbal gestures to explain procedures and oral hygiene instructions. As an immigrant myself, I found it meaningful and relatable to connect with patients navigating language barriers, which helped me build trust and rapport.

A particularly memorable experience was treating a physically disabled, wheelchair-bound patient. This required careful adjustments to accommodate their needs and ensure they felt supported. I focused on creating a comfortable environment by maintaining eye-level communication and using adaptive techniques for their care. Demonstrating patience and empathy throughout the appointment helped the patient feel at ease, reinforcing the importance of treating every individual with dignity and respect.

Most of the patients I treated required SRP due to periodontal disease and heavy calculus buildup, which reflected their limited access to dental care and education. Many were from low socio-economic backgrounds, highlighting the need for accessible public health services. Despite these challenges, I was encouraged by the positive outcomes of my work. Patients expressed gratitude for the care they received, and I felt a deep sense of fulfillment knowing I was making a tangible difference in their oral health.

This experience taught me valuable lessons about myself and my approach to working with diverse populations. I learned to be more patient, flexible, and resourceful in addressing barriers to care. It also reinforced my passion for public health dentistry and the critical role of empathy in building strong patient relationships. Moving forward, I am committed to advocating for equitable care and using these skills to serve diverse communities as a dental hygienist.