

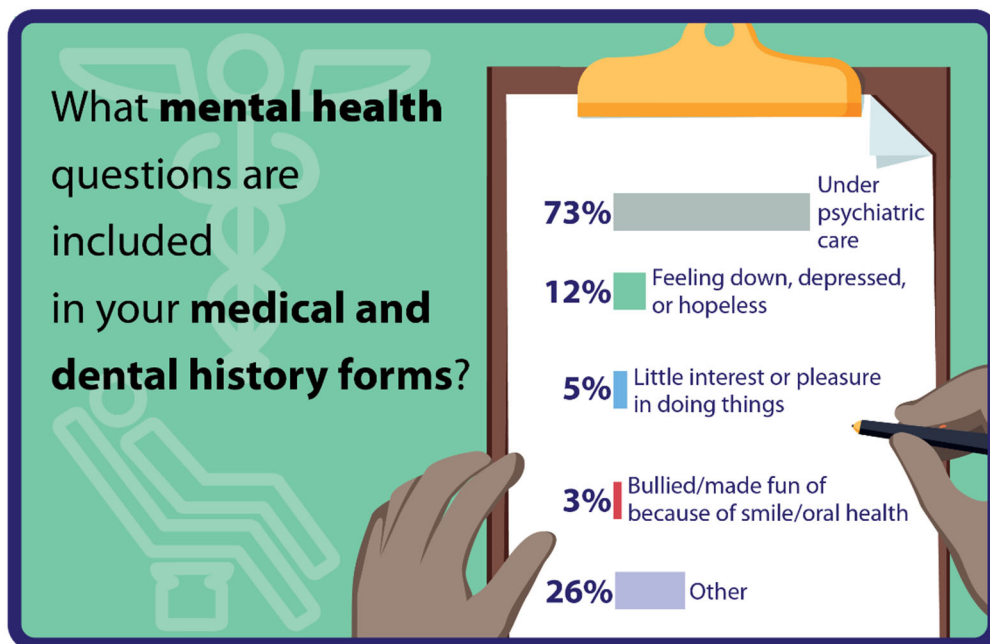
## Quick Poll Results: Mental Health Screening, Observation, and Intervention

Our October 2018 Quick Poll delves into practitioners' perspectives on mental health screening, observation, and potential intervention in a dental practice setting.

The overwhelming majority of the 465 Quick Poll respondents—almost 93%—agreed that mental health and dental health have some degree of correlation. For example, patients who are under stress may be more likely to experience bruxism and clenching.

While reviewing a patient's medical and dental history, oral health practitioners have the opportunity to identify mental health problems as well as factors that put patients at risk of mental health problems. Patients often do not disclose their health problems to their oral health practitioner because the proper question(s) may not have been asked.

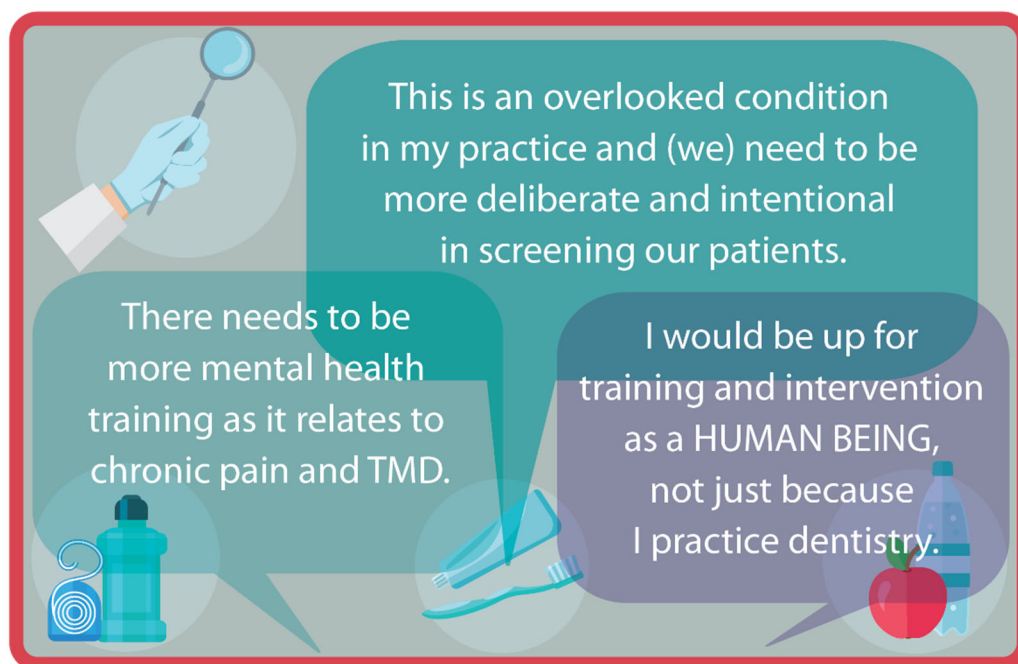
In the poll, 51% of practitioners replied that they ask some form of mental health question(s), and 44% reported that they did not ask.



As far as readily available resources for patients that may want to seek a mental health evaluation, 32% of practitioners said they can search online for a referral source. Only 5.6% have pamphlets at their office about dealing with stress reduction. There were several respondents that have mental health experts on site, have social workers on call, or will refer patients to a primary care physician. About one third (34%) felt mental health is not in the scope of a dental practice, and an additional 20% said they are not comfortable addressing mental health.

Some practitioners felt that they would benefit from training on mental health issues, and, similarly, that mental health professionals would benefit by training related to the need for oral care in patients with mental health problems. About two-thirds (66%) of the oral health practitioners polled said that they were willing to be trained by a mental health expert to help screen, observe, and possibly intervene for a patient with potential mental health issues, such as suicidal or violent ideation. A quarter (25%) were not willing to be trained, and almost 10% said they were unsure. Some of the respondents expressed liability concerns, and some mentioned that their patients are already being treated and the medical staff handles the screening and interventions as needed.

Further discussion of the role of mental health in a dental practice setting was generally supported by respondents.



To continue the conversation about dental care and mental health, please visit the Quick Polls Results thread in the [Member Forum](#).