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### Evaluation of Barriers to Access Treatment for Gum Disease: A Cross-Sectional Study

#### Abstract:

This study identified the specific factors which influence the treatment of gum disease. Specifically, the aims are to examine i) the differences in the prevalence of self-reported periodontitis treatment in 2011–2012 and 2017–2018, ii) the association between the background characteristics of respondents and treatment of gum disease, iii) the effects of the background characteristics on the treatment of gum disease and iv) reasons for the lack of access to dental care in 2011–2012 and 2017–2018. Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) oral health questionnaires 2011–2012 and 2017–2018 were used. NHANES is a periodic survey conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This data represents a stratified, multistage probability sample of the civilian noninstitutionalized population in the 50 United States (U.S.) and the District of Columbia. Binary multivariable logistic regression was used to examine the socioeconomic predictors of self-reported therapy for gum disease. Compared to 2011–2012, more participants accessed oral health care services during 2017–2018, resulting in fewer people seeking treatment for gum disease. Affordability and lack of dental health insurance were the primary reasons for not receiving treatment for gum disease. Compared with Whites, Asians were more likely to report having had treatment, followed by Hispanics and Blacks. Increasing oral health services for the elderly could improve access to care related to periodontal disease in this cohort of patients. In addition, the expansion of dental coverage with reduced out-of-pocket expenditure could improve access to dental services and overall health.

#### Biography

**Dorienne Taylor-Bishop, DDS**, graduated from Howard University College of Dentistry in 1992 and opened a private practice in Silver Spring, MD. She excels in calming anxious patients, values patient collaboration, and enjoys volunteering. Dr. Taylor-Bishop is an Adjunct Assistant Professor and active in her community, providing free dental care to underserved populations.