Recent studies reported the need for including elder abuse content in dental hygiene curricula. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to assess the elder abuse content in North Carolina (NC) dental hygiene programs. Methods: A nineteen item survey was mailed to ten NC dental hygiene programs (9 community colleges and 1 university). Part one contained four items that explored the curriculum content on domestic violence. Part two consisted of three items that assessed the topic contents and characterized students’ clinical experiences with older adults. Part three contained seven items (including three likert-type statements) which explored faculty opinions on the adequacy and format used for teaching elder abuse content. Part four consisted of five items which collected respondent’s demographic information. Data were analyzed using frequencies. Results: Eighty percent of the programs responded to the survey with 63% reporting that elder abuse material was included in the curricula. Signs, symptoms, and types of elder abuse comprised the content most often taught (63%). Although dental hygiene faculty reported teaching the content most often (63%), 75% of the respondents felt students did not receive adequate information on elder abuse due to lack of curricular time and faculty expertise. Resources used to present content included guest speakers/ slides/discussions (63%) or textbooks/articles (25%). Survey respondents (75%) were interested in CE courses, case studies, and slides to enhance their teaching of elder abuse. Conclusions: NC dental hygiene programs appeared to include elder abuse content more often than dental hygiene programs surveyed in a national study. The findings of this study support the development of educational materials to enhance the teaching of elder abuse content. This project was supported in part by the Carolina Geriatric Education Center (Bureau of Health Professions grant # 5-D31-HP80012-01-02).

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