

ARMOR NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2020

IMPROVING ORAL HEALTH DURING CANCER CARE

Thank You from the Research Team

It will be no surprise to anyone that this year posed unique challenges for our research team, both on a professional and personal level. As this difficult year comes to a close, we'd like to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude to all of our study participants, the friends and family that serve as their support systems, and the dedicated team of physicians, nurses, and other staff who have contributed to the ARMOR Trial over the past year. We would not be here without all of you!



ARMOR TRIAL UPDATES

Many things look different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and our research operations are no exception. From mid-March through July, Penn Dental Medicine was closed except for emergency dental care, which meant that we needed to temporarily pause enrollment into the study. Our team showed tremendous resilience during this time, contacting study participants by phone, and collecting as much information remotely as possible. We are extremely grateful to all of our study participants for their flexibility and willingness to continue working with us during these unprecedented times! Although the situation continues to change frequently, the safety of our participants and staff will always be our first priority. The ARMOR team follows all University of Pennsylvania and CDC recommended infection control procedures to help keep everyone healthy.

Despite the challenges we faced during the past year, we managed to hit a major milestone in December — randomization of 25% of our targeted 120 participants!

The ARMOR Trial is funded by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) grant number 5U01DE027637



CENTER FOR CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH UPDATES

The Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR) team is thrilled about our newly renovated clinical suite, opened in July 2020. The space features private clinical rooms with state-of-the-art equipment, plus office and meeting space. Our team also expanded this year, with the additions of Dr. Yuan Liu (Research Associate) and Katie Meeder (Lead Clinical Research Coordinator).

We have been keeping busy with a number of ongoing and upcoming research projects, including:

- 1** “The Seroepidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 in Dental Practitioners: A Prospective Study,” which looks at COVID-19 infection and risk in dental care providers. We are well on our way towards recruiting 300 dental personnel from within Penn Dental Medicine to test whether they are at an increased risk of COVID-19 infection.
- 2** The OHART Study, led by Oral Medicine expert Dr. Temitope Omolehinwa, will begin recruitment in early 2021. The goal of the study is to address gaps in our knowledge of the oral health status of patients living with HIV and other non-communicable diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes.
- 3** Also beginning in early 2021, Penn Dental Medicine will serve as a site in a large clinical trial to test a new anticavity toothpaste in children.



ORAL HEALTH TIPS

Despite the life-saving benefits of radiation therapy, some side effects can have a significant impact on your quality of life. One of the most common side effects is xerostomia (dry mouth), which can last even after your treatment is over. To lessen the effects of dry mouth, we recommend the following tips courtesy of the Cancer Support Community:

- | Sucking on sugar free tart candies prior to eating
- | Chewing on sugar free gum in between meals (look for products containing Xylitol; this sugar substitute has been proven to prevent tooth decay, and may increase saliva production)
- | Moistening foods with sauces and gravies

For more oral health recommendations and tips, take a look at the Cancer Support Community's website: <https://www.cancersupportcommunity.org/article/mouth-throat-changes>

Cranberry Coconut Popsicle

What is better for a dry mouth than a cool, soothing popsicle? Unlike typical frozen treats, this cranberry coconut popsicle provides fiber, healthy fat, and protein. It is the perfect snack for patients who are experiencing dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, and/or mouth sores from radiation treatment. This recipe is also very versatile – you can substitute the cranberry juice for any other fruit juice you prefer (as long as they aren't too acidic!)

Serves: 6

Prep time: 5 minutes

Minimum 2 hour freezing time required

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup canned coconut milk
- 1 avocado
- 2 cups cranberry juice

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in blender
2. Blend until smooth
3. Pour into popsicle molds
4. Freeze for at least 2 hours

TIP

If you have extra blended ingredients, make a smoothie out of it! Add the ingredients, yogurt, and frozen fruit for an extra satisfying treat.

NUTRITIONAL DATA

Per serving: 172 calories, 12 grams fat, 7 grams saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 15 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams dietary fiber, 1 gram protein

Recipe courtesy of the American Institute for Cancer Research:
<https://www.aicr.org/cancer-prevention/recipes/cranberry-coconut-popsicle/>



TEAM UPDATES

We have so much to be grateful for this year, from celebrating major life milestones to simply having more time to dedicate to favorite hobbies.

- | Dr. Pat Corby welcomed a new granddaughter to the family in December.
- | Kira got married in January 2020.
- | Jana has been spending time crafting and getting touch with her artistic side.
- | Rosa is busy in the kitchen, practicing her cooking skills and challenging herself to try new recipes.
- | Marta is enjoying the holiday season and baking cookies with her daughter.
- | Michelle added a new member to her family, a little terrier mix named Maisie.
- | Matt is two semesters closer to completing his MSEd in Statistics, Measurement, Assessment, and Research Technology (SMART).
- | Dr. Dennis Sourvanos continues to work towards his DScD in research.

The team had a ton of fun “taking over” the Oral Medicine department’s Instagram from November 9-13th! Check out our posts on @PennOralMed.

We hope you’ll keep in touch and share your happy news as well, whether it’s big or small! Please feel free to send us an email at PDM-ARMORTrial@dental.upenn.edu with any news you’d like to share with our team.

From the CCTR family to yours, we wish you and your loved ones a happy and healthy holiday season!