DENTAL CARIES STATUS AND ORAL HEALTH NEEDS AMONG DISABLED CHILDREN LIVING IN CARE CENTERS IN KATHMANDU VALLEY, NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

Although various attempts are being made to better the situation of dental caries in Nepal, the problem of caries among disabled children still seems to have reached a still. The general objective of this study was to identify the dental caries status by prevalence and severity (DMFT), knowledge and attitude in oral health practices and the oral health needs among children with disabilities aged 12-15 age group living in care centers in Kathmandu, Nepal. It was a cross sectional study with 120 respondents. Data was collected using constructed questionnaire and analyzed by using percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Chi square using level of significance at 0.05 and Mann-Whitney test. There was significant association between the type of disability and DMFT scores of the children.

The dental caries prevalence in the sample population was 98.3% and the mean DMFT of the children was 4.80±3.01. 56.90% of physically disabled children and 34.50% of children showed "high" severity of dental caries. 95% of the children needed treatment, the decayed component being the highest area of treatment need. The means of knowledge, attitude and practice were 5.57±1.72, 19.95±4.95 and 5.10±1.99 respectively.

There was significant difference of means of DMFT by the type of disability of children. Sensory disabled children had higher mean(2.48±0.65) than physically disabled children(2.06±0.79). Based on the analysis it is mandatory that special attention be given to disabled children to improve the dental caries status and their knowledge, attitude and practice. It is also suggested that along with encouraging oral health education programs, it was seen necessary that their treatment needs should be fulfilled along with preventive care being given to them.

KEY WORDS: DENTAL CARIES STATUS/DISABLED CHILDREN/ORAL HEALTH NEEDS

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