Caregiver Perception Of Their Child's Oral Health and Their Own

Vossers, S.¹; Camargo G.¹; Black, K.; Moss, M.E.¹; Pardi, V.¹
Greenville, North Carolina, United States

Objective: Evaluation of the relationship between the caregiver perception on their own and their child’s oral health and associated variables (Operating Room (OR) visits, sex, and family history of cavities).

Methods: De-identified electronic health data from ECU School of Dental Medicine Pediatric Axium were gathered including sociodemographic information, caregiver’s perception on their own oral health and their child’s oral health, family history of cavities, and OR visit status for children aged 0-5 years. SPSS was used to analyze data and provide descriptive statistics and correlations.

Results: This observational study consists of 2,315 pediatric patients (50.3% were male and 49.7% were female). 41.5% of the patients were Black, 29.5% were White, 14% were “other”, and the remaining were Asian, Hawaiian, Indian, Mixed, or refused to answer. 16.2% were Hispanic, while 71.2% were non-Hispanic. 16.4% of these patients had an OR visit to have dental needs treated. The correlation between child’s oral health, the caregiver’s oral health, family history of cavities, and sex of the patient were evaluated. A moderate statistically significant correlation was found between caregiver’s perception of their own oral and their child’s oral health (r=0.461, p<0.001). Family’s history of cavities was weakly correlated to caregiver’s oral health and the child’s oral health (r=0.185, p=0.001). There was a weak correlation between OR visits and caregiver perception of their child’s oral health (r=0.162, p<0.001).

Conclusion: An important relationship exists between the caregiver’s perception of their own oral health and their child’s oral health suggesting that family-centered interventions should be further evaluated for promoting oral health.

Introduction

According to the CDC, caries are one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood in the United States and left untreated can have detrimental effects on a child’s quality of life. It is generally understood that the behavior of parents or caregivers has an impact on their child’s health.

One study on the topic concluded that certain important oral health behaviors in parents, such as tooth brushing habits and their frequency of consumption of sweet foods, are contributing determinants of these behaviors in their young children and impacts their child’s oral health status [1].

Additionally, another study found that parents’ behaviors, but not attitudes, were associated with children’s oral health behavior This study also indicated that the parents of children whose oral health behavior was favorable were more likely to have favorable oral health-related behaviors [2].

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Discussion

50.8% of caregivers described their child’s oral health as good and 54.2% of caregivers described their own oral health as good. In contrast, 34.8% caregivers rated their child’s oral health as fair or poor, and 34.4% of caregivers rated their own oral health as fair or poor. This information shows parallels that may suggest caregiver and their child’s oral health descriptions are related, given similarly in the data.

Conclusions

An important relationship exists between the caregiver’s perception of their own oral health and their child’s oral health suggesting that family-centered interventions should be further evaluated for promoting oral health.

References
