



RELEVANCE OF THE PROBLEM OF PREVENTION OF DENTAL MORTALITY

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the critical issue of dental mortality prevention, shedding light on its contemporary relevance. Dental mortality, often overshadowed by other health concerns, presents a significant and preventable public health challenge. By exploring the factors contributing to dental mortality, the article highlights the importance of oral health education, access to dental care, and early intervention in averting dental-related deaths. It underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to address this overlooked yet impactful problem.

INTRODUCTION

Dental health is a fundamental component of overall well-being, often influencing one's ability to eat, speak, and maintain a high quality of life. However, in the realm of public health, the problem of dental mortality has historically received less attention compared to other health issues. Despite being less prominent on the global health agenda, dental mortality is a critical concern that demands recognition and proactive prevention efforts.

Dental mortality refers to deaths resulting from dental or oral health-related conditions, including infections, complications from untreated dental diseases, and associated systemic consequences (Tonetti et al., 2017). While the absolute number of dental-related deaths may not be as high as those attributed to major diseases like cancer or cardiovascular disorders, the impact of dental mortality on individuals and communities should not be underestimated.

Several factors contribute to the relevance of the problem of dental mortality in the contemporary context:

Preventability: A significant portion of dental mortality cases is preventable through effective oral health education, early intervention, and access to dental care. This preventive potential underscores the importance of raising awareness about dental health and promoting regular dental check-ups.



Oral-Systemic Health Linkage: Research has revealed a strong connection between oral health and systemic health. Dental infections, for example, can exacerbate conditions such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease (Pihlstrom et al., 2005). Understanding this linkage emphasizes the need for comprehensive healthcare that includes oral health.

Health Disparities: Dental mortality disproportionately affects vulnerable and underserved populations, exacerbating existing health disparities. Addressing dental mortality is not only a matter of healthcare equity but also a means to reduce broader health inequalities.

Quality of Life: Beyond its potential to be life-threatening, dental mortality can severely impact an individual's quality of life. Dental pain, infections, and tooth loss can lead to discomfort, social isolation, and compromised nutritional intake.

This article aims to shed light on the relevance of the problem of dental mortality in today's healthcare landscape. By examining the factors contributing to dental mortality and its far-reaching consequences, it emphasizes the importance of preventive dentistry, access to dental services, and comprehensive healthcare that includes oral health. Through increased awareness and targeted interventions, we can work toward a future where dental mortality is minimized, and individuals can enjoy better overall health and well-being.

Materials and methods. Epidemiology of Dental Mortality:

Dental mortality encompasses a range of conditions, including untreated dental infections, severe periodontal disease, and complications stemming from oral health neglect. While dental mortality statistics may vary by region and population, it is essential to recognize its impact on public health. In developed countries, dental mortality may be less common, but it still occurs, often linked to systemic diseases like diabetes or immunosuppression (Lockhart et al., 2016). In contrast, in less developed regions, dental mortality can be more prevalent, especially in areas with limited access to dental care (Kassebaum et al., 2017).

Preventable Deaths and Quality of Life:

One of the key aspects that make dental mortality relevant is its preventable nature. Dental conditions leading to mortality, such as untreated dental infections, are often manageable and treatable with timely and appropriate dental care. Lack of access to dental services and oral health education can lead to preventable deaths and significant suffering due to dental pain, discomfort, and compromised quality of life (Petersen & Ogawa, 2012).

Oral-Systemic Health Linkage:

The interconnection between oral health and systemic health is another critical factor underscoring the relevance of dental mortality prevention. Dental infections can lead to systemic complications, particularly in individuals with underlying health conditions. For example, periodontal disease has been associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and diabetes complications (Tonetti et al., 2017). Recognizing this linkage emphasizes the need for holistic healthcare that includes oral health assessments and interventions.

Health Disparities and Vulnerable Populations:

Dental mortality is not distributed equally across populations. Vulnerable and underserved groups, including low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with limited access to healthcare, bear a disproportionate burden of dental mortality (Nash et



al., 2018). Addressing dental mortality is a matter of healthcare equity and a step toward reducing broader health disparities.

The Role of Preventive Dentistry and Access to Care:

Preventive dentistry, including regular dental check-ups, oral hygiene education, and early intervention, plays a pivotal role in averting dental mortality (Petersen & Ogawa, 2012). Ensuring access to affordable dental services, especially in underserved areas, is critical to reducing dental mortality rates. Telehealth and community outreach programs can extend dental care to remote or disadvantaged communities, making prevention and treatment more accessible (American Dental Association, 2020).

In conclusion, the relevance of the problem of dental mortality extends far beyond the immediate impact of preventable deaths. It encompasses issues of equity, quality of life, and the interplay between oral and systemic health. Recognizing dental mortality as a pressing public health concern is a crucial step toward fostering comprehensive healthcare systems that prioritize oral health and preventable dental deaths.

Results and discussion

Preventable Nature of Dental Mortality:

The analysis of dental mortality data consistently reveals a significant portion of cases that are preventable through timely and appropriate dental care (Petersen & Ogawa, 2012). Dental infections, often the leading cause of dental mortality, typically begin as manageable dental conditions, such as dental caries or periodontal disease. Lack of access to dental services, coupled with a lack of awareness about oral health, can lead to the progression of these conditions to life-threatening infections. This highlights the critical importance of preventive dentistry and access to dental care in averting dental mortality.

Oral-Systemic Health Linkage:

The interconnectedness of oral health and systemic health has been extensively studied and underscores the relevance of dental mortality prevention (Lockhart et al., 2016). Periodontal disease, for instance, has been associated with increased risks of cardiovascular diseases, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and complications in individuals with diabetes. These findings emphasize that dental health is not isolated but intimately linked to overall well-being. Preventing dental mortality is not only about saving lives but also about improving the overall health and quality of life of individuals.

Health Disparities and Vulnerable Populations:

Dental mortality disproportionately affects vulnerable and underserved populations (Nash et al., 2018). Low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, and those with limited access to healthcare face higher risks of dental mortality. The reasons behind these disparities are multifaceted and include barriers to accessing dental care, limited oral health education, and the high cost of treatments. Addressing these disparities requires a multifaceted approach that includes improving access to care, enhancing dental education, and implementing policies that reduce inequalities in oral health.

Preventive Dentistry and Access to Care:

Preventive dentistry plays a pivotal role in averting dental mortality (Petersen & Ogawa, 2012). Regular dental check-ups, early intervention for dental conditions, and oral health education are essential components of preventive dentistry. Access to affordable dental



services is equally critical in reducing dental mortality rates, especially in underserved areas (American Dental Association, 2020). Telehealth and community outreach programs have emerged as promising strategies to extend dental care to remote or disadvantaged communities, bridging gaps in access.

Importance of Awareness and Education:

A key aspect of dental mortality prevention is raising awareness about the significance of oral health and the consequences of neglecting it. Public health campaigns and dental education programs can play a crucial role in promoting oral health awareness and encouraging individuals to seek timely dental care. Moreover, early intervention and education can prevent minor dental issues from escalating into life-threatening conditions.

In conclusion, the relevance of preventing dental mortality is evident from the preventable nature of most cases, the profound linkage between oral and systemic health, and the existence of health disparities that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. Preventive dentistry, access to dental care, and oral health education emerge as essential strategies in reducing dental mortality rates. By recognizing the preventable and interconnected nature of dental mortality, we can work toward a future where individuals of all backgrounds can enjoy good oral health and reduced risks of dental mortality.

Conclusion. The relevance of preventing dental mortality cannot be overstated. This article has underscored the critical importance of recognizing dental mortality as a pressing public health concern, despite its relatively lower visibility compared to other health issues. Several key findings and discussions have highlighted the significance of addressing this problem:

First and foremost, dental mortality is often preventable through timely and appropriate dental care. Dental infections and conditions that lead to mortality usually begin as manageable dental issues, such as cavities or periodontal disease. By enhancing access to dental services, promoting oral health education, and encouraging regular dental check-ups, we have the potential to avert these preventable deaths.

Furthermore, the strong linkage between oral health and systemic health emphasizes that dental health is not an isolated concern. Dental infections can exacerbate systemic diseases, affecting overall well-being. Thus, preventing dental mortality contributes not only to saving lives but also to improving the overall health and quality of life of individuals.

Health disparities play a significant role in dental mortality, disproportionately affecting vulnerable and underserved populations. Reducing these disparities requires multifaceted approaches that address barriers to dental care, improve dental education, and implement policies aimed at reducing oral health inequalities.

Preventive dentistry, with its emphasis on regular check-ups, early intervention, and oral health education, plays a crucial role in averting dental mortality. Ensuring access to affordable dental services, particularly in underserved areas, is equally vital in reducing dental mortality rates. Telehealth and community outreach programs are promising strategies to bridge gaps in access.

Lastly, raising awareness about oral health and the consequences of neglecting it cannot be underestimated. Public health campaigns and dental education programs are instrumental in promoting oral health awareness and encouraging individuals to seek timely dental care.



Early intervention and education can prevent minor dental issues from escalating into life-threatening conditions.

In conclusion, dental mortality prevention is a relevant and critical public health challenge. By recognizing the preventable nature of most cases, the profound linkage between oral and systemic health, and the existence of health disparities, we can collectively work toward a future where individuals of all backgrounds can enjoy good oral health and reduced risks of dental mortality. It is our responsibility to prioritize and invest in strategies that will save lives and improve the well-being of communities worldwide.

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