

Dental fear and its association with socioeconomic factors and dentist frequency

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Abstract

This research checked the association among anxiety related with dentals situations, elapsed time since the last dentist appointment, family income and education's levels of teenager's mothers and showed that maternal education has significant influences on children's anxiety.

Key words: anxiety, dental fear, adolescents.

Introduction

Researches demonstrate an association between the fear of submitting a dental treatment and deficient oral health, once that this fear or anxiety enable the individual avoid to schedule a new appointment and, not rarely, cancel it, committing its oral health. This research investigated the fear of submitting a dental treatment and its association with socioeconomic aspects and dentist visits between adolescents aged 14 to 16 years old, students of public schools of Piracicaba city on state of São Paulo.

Results and Discussion

The students' parents receive a copy of TCLE to sign and authorize the student participation, and a socioeconomic questionnaire. Authorized by parents, adolescents answered the questions of mensuration instruments of dental fear, Dental Anxiety Scale¹, and about the elapsed time since the last dentist appointment. **Results:** The majority of the sample consisted of female adolescents, children of mothers who had completed primary school, whose family earned less than four minimum wages as monthly income, and that lived with five persons in the same house. The elapsed time since the last dentist appointment was equal or below than 6 months for more than half of the research participants. Most adolescents had lower anxiety grades to the dental treatment. The anxiety grades to the dental treatment was significantly associated to the maternal educational level. (OR: 2.6165; IC: 1.2531-5.4629; p=0.0146).

Conclusions

We conclude that maternal levels of education can influence the adolescents' feelings about the dental situation, wherein between mothers with low levels of education there are more adolescents with moderate and extreme anxiety.

Acknowledgement

We thank CNPq for the studentship concession.

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