

Need of dental treatment and use of health service among Finnish university students: A national survey

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic had enormous consequences on people's lives globally. Healthcare services were greatly impacted, but the magnitude of the effect differed by population. We studied the need of dental treatment and use of dental services among Finnish university students.

Methods: The cross-sectional study utilized the data from the Finnish Student Health and Wellbeing Survey (KOTT 2021). The KOTT targeted in total 10'000 Finnish undergraduate students at the universities. We enquired the students about their current need of dental treatment. The survey also enquired about possible toothache or other tooth-related problems during the last 12 months and whether oral health services had been sufficient. The study also enquired about age, gender and perceived impact of COVID-19. Chi-square test and logistic regression models served for statistical analysis.

Results: In total, 6258 students participated in the study (response rate: 62.6%). Of the students 48% had had toothache or other dental problems during the last year. Of those in need of dental treatment, 42.8% reported not to have received sufficient oral health services. Females reported significantly more mental impact of the pandemic compared to males ($p<0.001$). The multivariate model (controlling for age, gender and perceived impact of COVID-19) revealed that the students with dental problems (OR=3.54, CI: 2.92-4.30) and insufficient oral health services (OR=5.95, CI: 4.91-7.22) had significantly higher need of treatment.

Conclusions: University students who had dental problems and who didn't acquire sufficient oral health services reported significantly greater need of treatment. Urgent and essential dental care should be prioritized during future pandemics.

Biography

Caixin Tian had mastery of basic theory in dentistry and acquired a wide range of research, experimental and practical skills, with the eagerness to become a considerate, skilled dentist and a dedicated researcher. She is devoted to the study of oral health problems caused by various environmental and social factors, promoting the field of preventive dentistry and exploring feasible solutions.

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