

ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE IN INDIA - "DEMAND VERSUS SUPPLY",

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ABSTRACT

Dental care is part of health care facilities provided by the government in India, dental care services are available in very few states at the primary health care level.^[1] Various factors like demographic, behavioral, socioeconomic, cultural and epidemiological etc., contribute to people decision to either forget care or seek professional assistance for dental problem.

KEYWORDS: access to dental care, India, Demand, need, supply.

“WHEN SPEAKING OF ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE TODAY, WE MUST CONSIDER BOTH AVAILABILITY OF CARE AND WILLINGNESS OF PERSON SEEKING CARE”

Oral health is critical but an overlooked component of overall health and well-being among children and adults. People generally consider oral health as an isolated compartment but the fact remains that oral health directly affects our life at all level.

Oral health problem such as dental caries, periodontitis and oral cancer are a global health problem in both industrialized and developing countries like India. Huge differences exist in the health status including oral health between urban and rural population in India. Although there have been impressive advances in both dental technosslogy and in the scientific understanding of oral diseases, significant disparities remain in both the rates of dental disease and access to dental care among sub-groups of population.

Although dental care is part of health care facilities provided by the government in India, dental care services are available in very few states at the primary health care level¹. Various

factors like demographic, behavioral, socioeconomic, cultural and epidemiological etc., contribute to people decision to either forget care or seek professional assistance for dental problem.

Earlier literature studies suggest an outsized presence of oral problems, suggesting an urgent need to act. Before putting an effort to solve it out, let's have a glimpse of grounds leading to it.

Factors affecting are

- Diet & Nutrition,^[2]
- Cultural factors^[1]
- Awareness^[1]
- Fluoride Exposure.
- Systemic infrastructure deficiency

ACCESS

The problem for inadequate access to dental care for some segments of population is complex and cannot be solved simply. As with more complex problems, a single, simple solution will not be effective and generally the “one size fits for all” concept will generate inadequate solutions. The first step in problem resolution is to understand the circumstances as well as possible. Failure to understand the barrier to care and addressing them adequately will result in limited success in enhancing access to dental care for underserved populations. This is attributed to dissatisfaction with reimbursement rates and limitations in the breadth of covered services.

VARIOUS STRATEGIES HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED TO IMPROVE ACCES TO DENTAL CARE. ONE OF THE STRATEGY IS triad of essential factors.

THE TRIAD OF ESSENTIAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTES IN IMPROVING ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE.(ALBERT H. GUAY,D.M.D 2004).



The above mentioned triad essential practice give by Albert H. Guay can be effective when applied to the Indian Scenario.

Majority of dental services in India is being provided by private dental practitioners, followed by non-governmental organizations. IDA has been formulated various strategies for providing dental services to poor people recently at science congress held at Noida some of which are as follows:(2014)

National Oral Health Card crystallises IDA's aim for optimal health for the nation and makes oral health care accessible to all Indians. This unique identification card offers a passport for oral health for a lifetime. The National Oral Health Card, the first card of its kind by IDA gives you many oral health benefits. You can be assured of all-round oral health care anywhere in the country.

CONCLUSION

Dental disease is a serious public health problem with universal distribution and affecting all age groups. Despite this universal distribution, only a few seek dental care. Providing access to appropriate dental care to undeserved segments of population is complex problem that will not be solved easily or quickly. Wide gap is created between the actual needs of the population and demand for dental care.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME ACCESS CONSTRAINTS IN A NUT SHELL

- Motivation and awareness

- Removal of anxiety and fear
- Development of mobile dental clinics, dental camps and dental outreach programs.
- Building of reasonably priced, rural oral health centers.
- Unmet treatment needs should be addressed during conduction of dental programs.
- School based screening and motivation programs should conducted

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