COVID-19 EFFECT ON PATIENTS OF GENERAL ANESTHESIA IN PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

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Objective.

To examine the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the dental status and habits of children who are candidates for dental treatment under general anaesthesia (GA).

Methods.

Prospective cross-sectional study that was conducted during the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Israel (March-April 2020). An online survey was distributed via short message service (SMS) and was completed by 79 parents. The questionnaire was designed for parents of children who are candidates for dental treatments under GA at the Unit of Pediatric Dentistry at the Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya, Israel. It included questions about the children's oral hygiene habits, dental symptoms, behavioral changes and psychological condition as perceived by their parents.

Results.

During COVID-19, poor emotional state positively correlated with deterioration in oral hygiene (P=0.032). Moreover, poor emotional state was associated with higher frequency of dental pain while eating (P=0.002) as well as spontaneous dental pain (P=0.001).

Conclusion.

In national emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in Israel, there is a top priority to continue providing dental services as usual, including treatments under GA. At the same time, dental healthcare providers should make every effort to educate both children and parents about oral health, for example, through platforms such as online prevention programs and teledentistry.