

Outline of an Oral Care Program for Children and Adolescents with Neuropsychiatric Disabilities



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Background

Mun-H-Center is a national orofacial resource centre for rare diseases with experience in specialist dental care for patients with neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD). Many children and adolescents need preventive dental care. Sensory hypersensitivity as well as cognitive difficulties can affect the patient's ability to cope with oral care at home and in the dental clinic. They often need a person-tailored approach and adapted treatment schemes as well as structured gradual exposure. In this patient group, it is important to establish good routines early in life so that a good oral hygiene can be maintained throughout life as well as early familiarisation to the dental care environment.

Aim

This project aims to provide a comprehensive oral care program for children and adolescents with NDD with guidelines for gradual exposure to the dental environment and treatment schemes for the dental team.



Materials and method

An extensive literature search on "NDD and dental care", "gradual exposure and anxiety", and "low arousal approach" was performed. The retrieved information was analysed by two dental nurses together with one paediatric dentist and one psychologist, all of them with long experience in working with children and adolescents with NDD. The information retrieved together with clinical experience was compiled into a written oral care program with focus on NDD for dental personnel.

Results

An oral care program was designed with background information on NDD, recommendations on environmental adaptations in the dental situation, pictorial support and preparation, guidelines for adapted gradual exposure and treatment schemes. The programme also included advice in communication and the "Low Arousal Approach".

Conclusion

Children and adolescents with NDD may need special consideration and adaptation to cooperate in the dental situation. Increasing the knowledge and providing information on person-tailored, low arousal approach and treatment strategies may facilitate the treatment planning for dental care personnel and improve the dental care and the success rate for children and adolescents with NDD.



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