DO HIV POSITIVE CHILDREN CARRY A HIGHER CARIES BURDEN THAN THEIR EQUIVALENT HEALTHY COUNTERPARTS?

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Abstract

Introduction: A number of published studies have reported variable findings in caries prevalence among HIV+ cohorts compared to children in the general population.

Objectives: To determine the caries prevalence, unmet treatment needs (UTN) and significant caries index (SiC) among 4-10 years old HIV+ children attending a specialized Paediatric Virology out-patients ward and to compare the results to the National Children’s Oral Health Survey (NCOHS).

Methods: This cross-sectional, descriptive study comprised of a convenient sample of 441 children (one of the largest HIV cohorts globally) attending the Charlotte Maxeke Hospital, Johannesburg, South Africa over a 18 month period. The oral health status was measured using WHO guidelines and criteria.

Results: Among the children (n=157) between the ages of 4-5 years, the caries prevalence of the primary dentition was 68.80%; the dmft was 4.75 (sd 4.3) and the UTN was 98%. For 6 (n=88) and 7-10 year olds (n=196), caries prevalence in primary teeth was 52.2% vs 64.3%; dmft was 3.53 (sd 4.31) vs 3.43 (sd 3.5) and UTN was 100% vs 87.5%. The mean dmft of the 4-5 &6 year olds was significantly higher than those reported in the NCOHS. Sic was significant for all age cohorts.
**Conclusion:** This cohort of HIV infected children had significantly higher caries prevalence and dmft scores for the 4-5 year olds only when compared to the national data; for 6 year olds, no significant differences were noted and for 7-10 years olds no comparative data existed. SiC was statistically significant across all age groups.