

Oral health is wealth

The impact of oral conditions on children in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2013

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When oral health is neglected in adults the impacts are bad. When oral health is neglected in children the impacts are worse as the consequences of poor oral health can also have a negative effect on the psyche of children. It can be extremely detrimental for their self esteem, and they are more likely to develop oral health complications in adulthood.

Sadly, one of the main reasons why oral health is often neglected is money, or rather the lack of it. We've all heard the old maxim that 'Health is wealth', a pithy statement that bears some truth for all, including children. However, in this *BDJ* article Dr Vahid

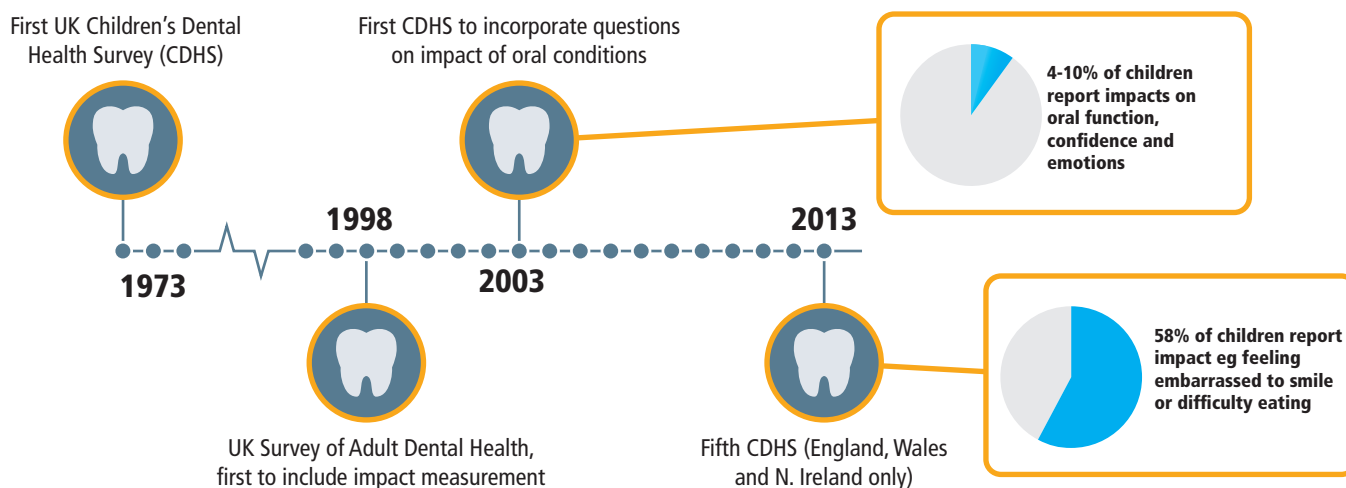
Ravaghi and colleagues provide evidence to the contrary to this adage. The aim of their study was to synthesise the main effects that oral conditions have on children (and their families), between the ages of 5 to 15, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They also aimed to document key findings on oral health symptoms and perceptions.

Oral symptoms such as toothache were found to be rampant amongst all age groups. In addition, their research revealed how children eligible for free school meals (FSM), and therefore on a low income, had a higher occurrence of diseases such as caries than

those children who came from a higher socioeconomic position. When children aged 12 and 15 were asked to rate their dental health, those ineligible for FSM rated their own dental health as higher than those eligible. What's more is that they found that the most significant oral impact faced by children of the latter group, was difficulty in eating and feeling embarrassed to smile. With the distinct disparity between the socioeconomic groups, it can be concluded that oral health perceptions and impacts amongst the more deprived, are substantially worse.

By Russell Hashemi

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How will the obesity epidemic affect dentistry?

A scoping review of the implications of adult obesity in the delivery and acceptance of dental care

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The UK adult population obesity rate is increasing year on year indicating devastating future effects on not only general health, but oral health too. In 2011 24% of men and 26% of women were obese and it is predicted that by 2050 this will have risen to a worrying 60% of men and 50% of women. Therefore, it is vitally important that dentists also consider the implications that this will have on the delivery of dental care.

Here, Marshman *et al.* have undertaken a literature review to attempt to answer the question 'what are the implications of obesity in the delivery and acceptance of dental care

for adults?' They demonstrate a number of implications ranging from an increase in dental disease (periodontitis and dental caries being the most likely), to difficulties in the logistics of delivering care, for example, the increase in time needed for each dental visit due to the immobility of the patients and difficulty in accessing the mouth because of extra weight around the face. They even present the idea that special equipment may be needed to accommodate obese patients such as larger dental chairs. Obese patients also have the potential to cause extra stress for the dentist because of compromised airways

and difficulty in safely sedating them.

Unfortunately, there was a lack of evidence related to patient perspectives and service delivery implications and, surprisingly, the authors discover that little research has been done on the subject even though obesity often hits the UK media headlines.

Ultimately, the authors suggest that dentists need to prepare for an increase in obese patients by ensuring that their training and equipment is appropriate for delivering care to them, and that they could also help prevent obesity by delivering dietary advice.

By Jonathan Coe