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Oral health registration & evaluation of the Belgian population: first results

The collection of information regarding the health condition, health related behaviours and care consumption profiles of a population is essential for an efficient planning of care delivery and optimal allocation of resources. To this end, health interview surveys and health examination surveys have been developed in several countries. Aim: To present the development and implementation of an oral health registration and evaluation system for the Belgian population, including some first results. Methods: Sampling of Belgian inhabitants (5 years old) took place using a stratified cluster sampling technique based on the Belgian National Registry (with household as primary sampling unit, 2,536 households included). Data collection was carried out in 2008-2010. Participants were visited at home by a dentist-interviewer and were invited to complete a validated questionnaire and to undergo an examination of the oral cavity. For this purpose, a team of 48 dentists received training and was calibrated. The questionnaire covered socio- demographic information (age, gender, nationality, educational level,...), oral health related behaviours (oral hygiene, dietary habits, dental attendance,...), presence of oral complaints and oral health related quality of life items. The clinical examination included a wide range of variables: presence of dentofacial anomalies, level of oral hygiene, periodontal condition, tooth wear, developmental defects of enamel, caries experience, presence of restorations, prosthetic status,... For each of these variables, existing standardized criteria were used, in most cases in line with the EGOHID recommendations. Ethical approval was obtained from Ghent University; informed consent was obtained from each of the subjects. This report presents descriptive statistics (SAS version 9.2), based on weighted data (according to age, gender and province). Results: 1,330 households agreed to participate (52%) yielding a total of 3,057 participants from which 53% women. Brushing 2x/day was reported by 50.4%; 39.6% cleaned also interdental. Dental visits were postponed because of fear by 17.9%. In 5-7 year-olds 64.4% was free of caries experience; in 65-74 year-olds this was the case in only 0.54%. In 55% untreated dental decay was recorded. Edentulism was seen in 12.5% of 15 year-olds. Conclusions: This first round of registration of oral health of the Belgian population indicated a considerable unmet treatment need. Acknowledgement: Project funded by National Institute of Health and Disability.

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