



ORAL HEALTH DISPARITIES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT SPECIAL NEEDS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, an estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant Special Needs, with over 240 million of them being children. Compared to children without Special Needs, Special Needs children are 24% less likely to receive early stimulation and responsive care.

It is believed that children with Special Needs have poorer oral health compared to those without Special Needs due to barriers in maintaining oral care. However, the scarcity of data for this population in Nigeria has left a huge gap in understanding their problems and how to proffer solutions to these problems.

The Mouth Mirror Project was designed to address the inequalities in the oral health of secondary school students with Special Needs.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the baseline oral health status of secondary school students with Special Needs and compare the obtained data with secondary school students without Special Needs.
- To empower these students with knowledge about oral disease prevention.
- Also, to provide appropriate referrals to standard facilities and distribute oral hygiene materials.

METHODOLOGY

Study Site: A public secondary school in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Study Population:

- Students from Junior Secondary School 1 (JSS 1) to Senior Secondary School 3 (SSS 3) with an age range of 11-26 years.
- This includes 6 class arms totaling 100 students (50 with Special Needs and 50 without Special Needs) selected randomly from the different classes.

Study Design:

- A comparative study.
- Administration of questionnaires.
- Oral cavity evaluation.
- Oral health education of students and, their caregivers.
- Distribution of oral hygiene materials such as toothpastes, toothbrushes and, educational comic cards.

DISCUSSION

- Contrary to our expectations, we found that students with Special Needs exhibited better oral health compared to students without Special Needs. This unexpected outcome suggests that caregivers in this facility might be providing exceptional oral hygiene care.
- To validate these findings and explore the underlying reasons further, we propose conducting this study on a larger scale. If this trend holds true, it would be crucial to examine the impact caregivers have made on the oral health of these students.
- Understanding the specific strategies employed by caregivers could provide valuable insights and potentially inform broader oral health interventions for all student populations.

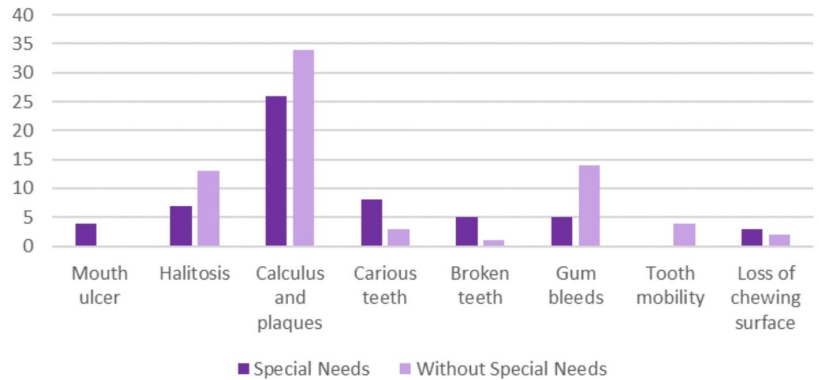
CONCLUSION

The preliminary results of this study underscore the necessity for its continuation on a larger scale to comprehend the level of oral hygiene awareness and oral health among secondary school students with Special Needs in Nigeria.

Caregivers should be urged to continue their care efforts while also ensuring they do not overlook the oral health and hygiene needs of students without Special Needs.

RESULTS

Bar chart distribution of oral health problems among Students with Special Needs and those without Special Needs



- From the 100 students that participated in the survey, 50 were students with Special Needs and the other 50 were students without Special Needs. In total, we had 37 Males, 54 Females and 9 people who did not select any of the above options.
- Result shows Halitosis (26%), calculus and plaques (68%) and, gum bleeds (28%) were found to be more prevalent in the control group (Students without Special Needs).
- Mouth ulcer (8%), Carious teeth (16%), Broken teeth (10%), and, Loss of chewing surfaces (3%), with lower prevalence values, were found to be common among students with Special Needs.
- These significant findings may be as a result of the Caregivers in this facility who care for the overall health and well-being of those students with Special Needs.

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REFERENCE

