Assessing the Change in Pattern of Dental Visits and Treatment Performed at Primary Care Centre (PCC) in Selangor During the Pre-pandemic and During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Emerging of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has affected the delivery of healthcare services, including oral healthcare services. All dental procedures generate aerosol, and droplet from infected patients may lead to virus transmission [1]. Thus, dental visits and treatment during COVID-19 outbreak in primary care were restricted to only emergency cases. Dental visits provide a true picture of utilisation of dental services. Utilisation of dental services is vital for an individual life because underutilisation can lead to poor oral health. This study sought to explore and elucidate the changing pattern of dental visits and treatment performed in Primary Care Centres (PCC) during the pre-pandemic and COVID-19 pandemic.

This retrospective record review of dental visits and treatment was conducted by retrieving the Monthly Workload State Report of Dental Officer (PG 207) and Dental Therapist (PG 206) at the Oral Health Division in Selangor from January 2018 to December 2021. The data was the total number of each month’s dental visit and treatment performed. A descriptive analysis was reported in frequency, percentage, and graph. Chi-Square was used to test the association with the significance level set at p˂0.05, was carried out in OpenEpi online software.

During pre and pandemic COVID-19, dental visits at the PCC were higher among schoolchildren (67.0%), followed by adults (24.3%) and antenatal mothers (2.6%). The most common dental treatment recorded during the pre-pandemic was filling (85.5%), and tooth extraction (27.3%). The changing pattern of dental visits and treatment given was observed during the pandemic. The spiking points identified were correlated with changes in policies implemented nationwide during the MCO phase, as declared by the National Security Council. The number of dental visits was low (14.4 %) during MCO 2. Due to the closure of schools in MCO 2 in January 2021, the number of dental visits was found to be low. There is an association in the number of dental visits with the phase of MCO (p<0.01).

The pattern of dental visits and treatments performed changed during the pandemic. The number of dental visits and dental treatment performed at the PCC was reduced during the pandemic, particularly in the Movement Control Order (MCO) phase in Selangor.

Keywords
Dental visits, pre-pandemic, COVID-19 pandemic
Reference