

Rationale for restoration of carious primary teeth: a review

Précis

The literature regarding the dental and systemic effects of early childhood caries, the consequences of leaving carious primary teeth untreated, the benefits of appropriate treatment, and concerns regarding dental treatment of young children and the potential for dental anxiety, is reviewed.

Abstract

Early childhood caries (ECC) has consequences, affecting both the child's dental health and his/her general health.

This paper reviews the literature regarding ECC and its consequences (pain, sepsis, space loss, disruption to quality of life, failure to thrive, effects on intellectual development, greater risk of new carious lesions in both primary and permanent dentitions, higher incidence of hospitalisation and emergency visits, and increased treatment costs and time). The effects of treatment of ECC are also reviewed, and concerns regarding purported associations between treatment of ECC and dental anxiety are addressed.

Search method

A PubMed search was conducted of peer-reviewed papers published in the English language in the years 1986-2011, using the search terms: early childhood caries (ECC); nursing caries (NC); consequences and ECC/NC; treatment and ECC/NC; treatment outcomes and ECC/NC; dental anxiety; dental fears; onset of dental anxiety/fear; and, dental experiences and dental fear/anxiety. More than 300 articles were studied. Reference lists of the selected articles were also studied, and frequently quoted articles were thus also located. Articles with small sample size, poor or poorly described methodology, and unclear or unsupportable conclusions were rejected. A representative sample is presented in this paper, citing the articles with greater levels of evidence, with a description of study methods, where appropriate.

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Supporting career choices in dentistry

Abstract

The Cork University Dental School & Hospital, University College Cork, introduced an innovative programme in April 2011, which provided prospective dental students with an opportunity to participate in a one-day experiential workshop. The aim of the workshop was to provide students with an overview of the dental undergraduate programmes. Feedback on the workshop was exceptionally positive, and prospective students would recommend the workshop to a fellow student, as it helped to inform their decision about choosing dentistry as a first option.

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