

# TREATMENT PROVIDED FOR PATIENTS AT THE PEDODONTIC CLINIC IN MUHIMBILI MEDICAL CENTRE

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyses the distribution and frequencies of different types of services provided to the 4537 patients who attended the pedodontic clinic at Muhimbili Medical Centre in a period of 6 months. Of all patients 54.8% were girls and mainly of age group 6-12 years (54.2%). Conservation was more among girls and of the higher age group, while extraction was more among boys and the lower age group. Periapical infections were more among the younger age groups. Extraction of exfoliating teeth and other treatment category had no sex difference but was predominant among the 6-12 years, and 13-25 years respectively. The younger ones were brought more for emergency treatment while the older ones came mainly for conservation. The clinic's function

is still very much emergency oriented and can be concluded that the community in Dar es Salaam does not receive the preventive and restorative services as should be.

## INTRODUCTION

In Dar es Salaam children and adults have been claimed to show a high prevalence of dental caries in comparison to people living outside the capital (1). Dental health care has not been given very high priority in Tanzania, hence the services are rather poor regarding staff, rooms, equipment and materials (2). Majority of Tanzanians seek dental health care on an emergency basis (3), whereby extraction due to caries is the commonest treatment required followed by restoration (3,4,5,6). Only a small minority visit the dental clinics for regular

dental care (3). Pietila and Widstrom (4) in a study done in Finland also showed that caries and its consequences were the main reason for dental visits. The National Plan for oral health suggests that the consequences of dental caries such as early tooth loss and disfigurement, should be given special priority for curative and preventive services (7). This study aimed to analyse the main type of treatment provided in the pedodontic clinic according to age and sex. Also to provide base line data for further evaluation and analysis thereby enabling proper planning for Pedodontic Oral Health care at Muhimbili Medical Centre.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Data of 4537 patients between the age of 0-15 years including school children up to the age of 25 years attending the pedodontic clinic of Muhimbili Medical Centre during a period of six months were recorded daily in a register book with subsequent numbers and specification of age, sex diagnosis and treatment provided.

For computer analysis the sex and treatment provided was coded and age was grouped according to type of dentition. 0-6 years, 7 - 12 years and 13-25 years with primary, mixed and permanent dentition respectively. Statistical analysis was done using the Chi square test.

## RESULTS

Of all patients (N=4537) age group 6-12 years had the highest percent of attendance (54.0%), followed by age group 13-25 years (33.2%). Age group 0-5 years had the least attendance (12.8%). When compared boys attended more in the lower age group 0-5 and 6-12 year olds while girls were more in the age group 13-25.

The most frequent type of treatment provided was extraction due to caries (57.9%) followed by conservation (23.4%). 8.1% had periapical infections and 4.9% had their primary teeth extracted. Girls attended more for conservation (26.5%) compared to boys who came mainly for extractions (60.5%) Periapical infections were higher among boys than girls. There was no sex difference noticed in the extraction of mobile teeth and other treatment provided. The youngest age group 0-5 years had the highest percentage of extracted teeth (68.6%) while caries for conservation was highest in age group 13-25 years (40.9%). Primary mobile teeth were

extracted most in age group 6-12 years (7.9%). Other treatment was rendered most to the older age group 13-25 years (5.0%).

## DISCUSSION

As in accordance with other studies (4,8) a larger number of attendance was by females than males although Beck (99) in his study showed that males had a higher level of carious attack than females and that more carious teeth were extracted from males than females. In this study it was noticed that the most rendered treatment was extractions followed by conservation. Studies done by others also had showed a similar trend (5, 10, 11).

Age group 6-12 years had the highest attendance probably contributed to by the presence of mixed dentition. The National Dental Health Surveys revealed a higher caries prevalence in urban children up to the age of 10 years than among 10-14 years old, a situation not observed among rural children (7). This study shows that children in Dar es Salaam are not in

the habit of visiting the dentist for regular check-ups. Abiose (13) in his study carried out in Nigeria also found that there were only a minority (4.4%) who came for check-ups while a majority were for extractions (27.11%), followed by restorations (16.86%).

This study shows that there is a considered amount of loss of teeth at such early age. It is therefore recommended that oral health education should be emphasized.

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