



Use of Dental Health Services in Type 2 Diabetic Patients, Covered under Taiwan National Health Insurance (NHI) System

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Background

As the result of the prevalence of type 2 diabetes, it was also the fifth of top ten causes of death in Taiwan. Studies show that periodontal disease is commonly encountered in diabetic patients. Although the relationship between diabetes and oral health awareness is lacking, it is suggested that supports patients, covered under NHI system.

Objective

Health insurance is a key factor for patients to seek health care services. Known as the single-payer comprehensive system, the Taiwanese system provides preventive medical and dental services. This study suggests regular dental visits are important for patients, therefore evaluated the use of dental health services under the NHI system.

Method

Total 348 patients were recruited from the Oral Health Center in Kaohsiung Medical University Hospital. The study was approved by a research ethics committee. Data were collected by a questionnaire and clinical examination. The variables included age, gender, duration of diabetes, perceived oral health, periodontal disease, dental visit in 6 months, oral health advice from health professionals (multi), brush teeth, see dentist regularly, check gingiva, and use dental floss.

Table 1. Participants' socio-demographic characteristics. (N=348)

Characteristic	No.	%
Age, mean±SD	56.7±9.6	
HbA1c, mean±SD	7.7±1.6	
Duration of diabetes (year)		
<5	190	55.9
5-10	69	20.3
>10	81	23.8
Gender		
Male	204	58.6
Female	144	41.4
Yearly household income (NTD)		
<450000	178	52.5
450000-600000	64	18.5
>600000	97	28.6
Educational level		
Less than junior high school	195	56.0
High school	103	29.6
Higher than technical school/college	50	14.4
Occupational		
Yes	174	50.0
No	174	50.0
Perceived oral health		
Very good /Good	80	23.0
Common	171	49.1
Very poor/Poor	97	27.9
Periodontal disease		
No	191	45.1
Yes	157	54.9
Dental visit in 6 months		
No	225	64.7
Yes	123	35.3
Oral health advice from health professionals (multi)		
Brush teeth	107	30.8
See dentist regularly	102	29.3
Check gingiva	24	6.9
Use dental floss	54	15.5

Table 2. Logistic regression analysis of factors related to dental visit.

Variables	Dental visit				
	Yes	No	OR	95% CI	
	No.	%	No.	%	
Gender					
Female	49	39.8	95	42.2	ref.
Male	74	60.2	130	57.8	1.18
Age, mean±SD	57.2±9.1		58.5±10.8		1.02
Educational level					
Less than junior high school	67	54.5	128	56.9	ref.
High school	30	27.4	72	32.4	0.75
Higher than technical school/college	26	28.1	24	10.7	0.30
Periodontal disease					
No	51	41.5	140	60.2	ref.
Yes	72	58.5	85	37.8	0.50
Advice (see dentist regularly)					
No	66	52.7	180	80.0	ref.
Yes	37	46.3	46	20.0	0.25

