

Abstract

Background: Periodontitis is a disease that affects a majority of the population worldwide. Information available on periodontitis from different studies is contradicting with some studies showing increased prevalence in the younger age groups and others more in the elderly people. Males appear to be more affected in some studies whereas at different stages of growth in females have an increased prevalence. Modifying factors for periodontitis include occupation, racial differences and genetics. Here in Kenya, the only study done that focused on the epidemiology was done by V. Baelum and others in the year 1988. However, information on risks and modifying factors is very scarce. **Objectives:** To determine the socio-demographic characteristics of patients with periodontitis visiting the UoN Dental Hospital. **Design:** This will be a descriptive cross-sectional study using Hospital based patients records **Setting:** the study was conducted at the UoN Dental hospital and included records of patients diagnosed with periodontitis from the year 2002 to 2003. **Methods:** A total of 200 clinical records of patients treated at the periodontal clinic were selected by systematic random sampling and included in the study. Demographic characteristics such as age, sex, occupation and other veritable of interest to study was done using the computer programmed SPSS 12.0 for windows. **Results** Males were more affected (52.5%) and most patients were between 25 to 35 years (42%) the self employed individuals were more affected (33%) while the formally employed such as nurses, teachers and government officials constituted 29.7% and the unemployed were 24.5%. The Kikuyu ethnic group constituted 65.5% of the cases. Most patients came from within Nairobi and its environs (64%). 17.6% were smokers and 27% consumed alcohol. Miraa chewing was only 7.5% and tooth picking 43.5% of the cases, flossing prevalence was 6% and other habits such as use of chewing sticks, mouthwashes, grass and opening of soda bottles using teeth were 7.5%. **Conclusion** Males were affected more than females by periodontitis. Young adults between ages 25 to 35 were also more often diagnosed with the disease and most patients are from within Nairobi and urban towns around it. The Kikuyu ethnic group comprised most of the patients seen but few patients smoked, took alcohol or chewed miraa. **Recommendations** The results from this study can be used in identifying individual and groups of people among the general population who appear to be at risk of developing periodontitis and therefore help in dealing for dental services for prevention, control and treatment of the disease. On the other hand, a comprehensive study needs to be carried out on the socio demographic characteristics of patients with periodontitis even in other health institutions. This would help researchers studying different aspects of periodontitis and planners of dental health services to formulate policies to tackle the disease.