Prevalence of oral lesions in HIV infection and their relationship with CD4 count at a Nairobi centre

Abstract:

To determine the dental caries experience and knowledge on the causes and preventive measures for dental diseases. DESIGN: A community based cross-sectional descriptive study. SETTING: Elwak sub-district hospital, North Eastern Province, Kenya. SUBJECTS: One hundred and forty one adults who presented themselves during a dental check up at a sub-district hospital and gave written consent. MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES: Dental caries status and knowledge on its causes and preventive measures. The importance of outreach programmes in obtaining information as well as helping to alleviate the pain and suffering caused by dental diseases among communities living in remote areas is also revealed. RESULTS: Of the one hundred and forty one individuals, who were included in the study, 63.1% were women and 36.9% were men. Their ages ranged between 18 and over 65 years. 41.1% were in the 18-24-year age bracket. Regarding the oral health knowledge, 43% did not know any causes of dental diseases while 36%, 17% and 12% knew that diet, "dirt" on teeth and bacteria were possible causes, respectively. Fifty percent did not know any preventive measures for dental diseases while the rest indicated abstention from the consumption of sugary foods; and only 0.8% mentioned use of fluoridated toothpaste as a preventive measure for dental caries. 56.7% of the subjects were caries free. The mean DMFT for all ages was 3.4. Of those with caries 72.1% were women. CONCLUSION: There is a low level of oral health awareness and a moderately high level of dental caries experience in this community with women apparently carrying the biggest burden of dental caries.