

Abstract

TITLE Use of dental care and prevalence of caries among immigrant and Spanish-born children.

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J Dent Child (Chic). 2011 Jan-Apr;78(1):36-42.

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this paper was to describe the use of dental services and the prevalence of dental caries in children living in Madrid, Spain.

METHODS: A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted using data from the Madrid City Health Survey. The questions asked were: (1) When was the last time your child visited the dentist? (2) What was the reason for your child's last visit? and (3) Is your child currently suffering from caries, fillings, or bleeding from the gums when brushing? The independent variables included: sex; age; education level; and nationality.

RESULTS: Data from 960 children (approximately 27% of whom were immigrants) were analyzed. Over the last year, approximately 59% of the children had received dental care and 28% suffered from caries. After multivariate analysis, we observed that 3- to 6-year-old children, immigrants, and children of parents with low education levels are more likely not to have received dental care during the last year. We also found that children are more likely to suffer from caries as they get older and if they are immigrants.

CONCLUSIONS: Being an immigrant and from a lower education level typically results in a less frequent use of dental health services, and children of immigrants have a greater risk of suffering from dental caries. It is essential to investigate the reasons why and introduce strategies to reduce barriers to dental health access among immigrants.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22041007>