

Impact of Covid-19 on Oral Health and Vice Versa

Gargi Mukherjee*

Department of Dentistry, India

***Corresponding Author:** Gargi Mukherjee, Department of Dentistry, India.

Received: July 28, 2021

Published: August 28, 2021

© All rights are reserved by **Gargi Mukherjee.**

Abstract

COVID refers to coronavirus disease 2019. This disease, which has been declared a pandemic spreads from one person to another through droplets when an infected person comes in close contact with a healthy person. The mode of spread through contaminated surfaces is still debatable as there is no clear evidence till date. The virus has myriad manifestations which include headache, fever, cough, sore throat, muscle and joint pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and pneumonia. This article is an overview on the effects of COVID-19 on oral health and the impact of good oral health in recovery from COVID.

Keywords: COVID-19; Periodontitis; Stress; Xerostomia; Cracked Teeth

Introduction

Oral health is a vital part of our overall health. Mouth/oral cavity is the entry point of all micro-organisms. So, it is imperative that we pay attention to it especially during this pandemic. COVID-19, as we all know has taken a toll on not merely our physical but also mental well-being. It is caused by SARS-Co-V-2 (Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2). This name was chosen because the virus is genetically related to the coronavirus responsible for the SARS outbreak in 2003. According to WHO the virus spreads from an infected person's mouth in droplet or aerosol form when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. The manifestation of Covid-19 can range from mild fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, malaise to complications like pneumonia or acute respiratory failure.

How oral health impacts covid and post covid recovery

According to a new study led by McGill researchers, periodontitis may result in higher rates of complications in individuals diag-

nosed with COVID-19. Periodontitis also referred to as gum disease in layman's term, results from an inflammatory reaction initiated in the gingiva that spreads to the supporting structures of the tooth. If it is left untreated, it can lead to significant amount of bone loss. Researchers discovered that COVID-19 patients with periodontitis were 3.5 times more likely to be admitted to the ICU, 4.5 times more likely to need a ventilator and 8.8 times more likely to die compared to those without periodontitis. CRP level, which is a biomarker of inflammation, is higher in COVID patients with gum disease which leads to increased complications.

How covid affects oral health

The first thing that comes to mind when we think of COVID is stress. COVID has literally stressed out more than 80 percent of people across the world in one way or the other. From job losses to losing loved ones, families have gone through very stressful times. And stress affects oral health to a great extent. Many people tend to grind their teeth when stressed which leads to cracked and chipped

Figure: Source: Courtesy-medindia.net.

teeth which gets worse without treatment. Xerostomia or dry mouth has also seen a rise in this pandemic; the primary reason being mouth breathing due to increased use of masks. Mouth breathing desiccates the oral tissues and causes halitosis and consequent increase in the number of harmful bacteria. COVID also causes damage to the blood vessels supplying the mouth that causes increased ulcers and breakdown of gingival tissues. Some researchers also believe that the multi-drug therapy used for treating COVID patients may aggravate oral pathologies.

Precautions to be taken

- Patients should be advised to stay hydrated all the time in order to prevent desiccation of oral tissues and dry mouth.
- Include more of green leafy vegetables and fruits to provide essential nutrients to the oral tissues.
- Decrease high sugar intake or acidic food and avoid snacking in between meals.
- Patients should be advised regarding correct brushing and flossing techniques.
- Xylitol chewing gums could reduce dry mouth to a great extent [1-4].

Conclusion

Oral condition like periodontitis can be prevented if we are little more cautious in maintaining good oral hygiene with proper brushing and flossing techniques, and periodic visit to the dentist for routine check-ups. There is still no concrete information regarding the correlation between COVID and oral health but as they say "Prevention is better than cure".

Bibliography

1. Amany Hany Mohamed Kamel, *et al.* "Impact of oral health status on covid-19 severity". *British Dental Journal* (2021).
2. Karen Davis. "COVID-19 Impacts Oral Health—Even If You Don't Acquire the Viral Infection". *Dentistry Today* (2021).
3. theperiogroup.com.
4. mcgill.ca. Good oral health reduces risk of fatal outcomes from COVID-19.

Volume 5 Issue 9 September 2021

© All rights are reserved by Gargi Mukherjee.