

Gender Differences towards Dental Health Knowledge, Attitude and Utilization of Dental Care

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Abstract

Understanding the effect of gender on oral health would facilitate the development of successful attitude and behavior modification approach towards sustainable oral health. This study assessed the behavior, knowledge, rate, and pattern of dental service utilization of the students and workers of Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP). It also tested the widely documented hypothesis that women have better oral health behavior, oral hygiene, and periodontal status but higher dental caries rates than men. Further, it determined what dental procedure is mostly utilized by the patients. The data were based on annual dental records of AUP Dental Department and oral interviews. From the dental record of the year 2017, a total of 2,472 patients visited the dental clinic for the following procedures: oral prophylaxis (40%), tooth extraction (13%), tooth restoration (14%), prosthodontics (7%) and orthodontics (25%). Among the dental procedures, women are always higher in number compared to men. In terms of gender, 960 or 39% of men and 1,512 or 69% of women visited the clinic revealing that women have dental visits more often than men. Oral prophylaxis and orthodontic are two of the most availed dental procedure while prosthodontics is the least. Despite AUP Clinic's promotion for health care and health care services, dental health care utilization remains very low relating to the whole university population. Women are more concerned with oral health than men, contrary to other researches that males have higher oral health knowledge score than females. Gender differences have no significance in terms of dental care utilization. Participants' oral health knowledge is at least average and they showed positive attitude towards dental treatment. It is recommended that more oral or dental health campaign be done; utilization of dental service fee among students be promoted; and the importance of oral health be taught.

Keywords: *gender difference, dental health knowledge, attitude, utilization*