

Evaluation of the school dental services provided by the School Dental Therapists in the western province of Sri Lanka.

MD (Community Dentistry) - 2005

D 1423

The evaluation was carried out in terms of five major dimensions namely, efficiency, effectiveness, adequacy, equity and quality using seventeen indicators. These indicators validated using the consensual opinion of ten experts in dental public health. The study was conducted in twenty school dental clinics selected randomly. The mean cost of providing care per dental visit was Rs.124.24. Roughly 70 percent of feeder schools had been covered through outreach clinics. About 56 percent of the children in the target age group were screened in feeder schools and of those screened approximately 90 percent received care for the identified treatment needs. School Dental Services are not distributed in an equitable manner. The mean SDT: target population ratio was 1: 5084 in the Western Province: It ranged from zero to 1: 1425 at the DS divisional level. The study revealed that 98 percent of dental extractions carried out were satisfactory. In contrast only 62 percent of dental restorations and 63 percent of scaling done by the School Dental Therapists were satisfactory. It seemed that some of the dental therapists were unable to assess the treatment need for scaling. It was also revealed that almost 17 percent of clinical records were inaccurate. A further 25 percent were incomplete. Almost all the school dental clinics selected for the study had satisfactory physical facilities. However, the mean availability of surgical consumables was approximately 60 percent. Overall, the proficiency exhibited by the School Dental Therapists was satisfactory. Over 70 percent of the School Dental Therapists obtained a cumulative score over 70. The majority (80 percent) of the School Dental Therapists were satisfied about the physical facilities in the clinics. However 50 percent were not satisfied with the equipment and 80 percent with the delivery of dental materials and other consumables. A large majority (89 percent) of the recipients of the School Dental Service were satisfied about the standard of care provided by the School Dental Therapists and approximately 92 percent were of the opinion that the School Dental Service should continue as at present without change.