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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Assessment of Basic Knowledge on Orofacial Pain amongst Undergraduate Dental Students

Évaluation des Connaissances de Base sur les douleurs Orofaciales chez les Étudiants en Odontologie

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: With pain being the major cause of visits to the dental clinic, the basic knowledge of causes for adequate management is paramount for dentists and dentists-in-training to improve the quality of life of patients.

OBJECTIVE: The study was conducted to assess the knowledge of undergraduate dental students regarding orofacial pain (OFP) and how comfortable they are understanding, identifying, and diagnosing different categories of OFP.

DESIGN: A cross-sectional study was carried out amongst penultimate and final year dental students of two dental schools. A modified questionnaire on basic knowledge of OFP which contained 16 questions was adopted to evaluate students' knowledge. Questions also assessed how comfortable the students were diagnosing the different categories of OFP. P value was set at ≤ 0.05 (exact).

RESULTS: One hundred and four undergraduates participated in the study. The age range was 23–33 years while the mean was 24.3 ± 2.1 years. Only 31% got the basic questions correctly. About 51% in both levels claimed they had moderate knowledge (scale 5–7) of pain education, while 64% of final year students felt their knowledge was adequate for their clinical needs, 50% of the penultimate year felt otherwise ($p=0.02$). All students however believed they needed more teaching on orofacial pain, with the most preferred form of learning being clinic-based teaching (40.4%).

CONCLUSION: The study showed moderate self-assessed knowledge but low general basic knowledge of OFP by the undergraduate students; possibly a reflection of the curriculum. Therefore, there is a need to improve the curriculum for orofacial pain teachings in dental schools. **WAJM 2023; 40(10); 1060–1066.**

Key words: Orofacial pain, knowledge, undergraduates, dental education, Nigeria

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE : La douleur étant la principale raison des visites chez le dentiste, la connaissance de base des causes pour une gestion adéquate est primordiale pour les dentistes et les étudiants en odontologie afin d'améliorer la qualité de vie des patients.

OBJECTIF: L'étude avait pour but d'évaluer les connaissances des étudiants en odontologie sur les douleurs orofaciales (DOF) et dans quelle mesure ils se sentent à l'aise pour comprendre, identifier et diagnostiquer les différentes catégories de DOF.

CONCEPTION: Une étude transversale a été menée auprès des étudiants en odontologie de deux écoles dentaires en avant-dernière et dernière année. Un questionnaire modifié sur les connaissances de base en DOF, comprenant 16 questions, a été adopté pour évaluer les connaissances des étudiants. Les questions ont également été évaluées dans quelle mesure les étudiants se sentaient à l'aise pour diagnostiquer les différentes catégories de DOF. La valeur P a été fixée à $\leq 0,05$ (exacte).

RÉSULTATS: Cent quatre étudiants ont participé à l'étude. La tranche d'âge était de 23 à 33 ans, avec une moyenne de $24,3 \pm 2,1$ ans. Seuls 31 % ont répondu correctement aux questions de base. Environ 51 % des étudiants des deux niveaux ont affirmé qu'ils avaient des connaissances modérées (échelle de 5 à 7) en éducation sur la douleur, tandis que 64 % des étudiants en dernière année estimaient que leurs connaissances étaient adéquates pour leurs besoins cliniques, 50 % des étudiants en avant-dernière année pensaient le contraire ($p=0,02$). Cependant, tous les étudiants estimaient avoir besoin d'un enseignement supplémentaire sur les douleurs orofaciales, la forme d'apprentissage préférée étant l'enseignement en clinique (40,4%).

CONCLUSION: L'étude a montré une connaissance auto-évaluée modérée mais des connaissances de base générales faibles sur les DOF parmi les étudiants en odontologie, ce qui pourrait être le reflet du programme d'études. Par conséquent, il est nécessaire d'améliorer le programme d'enseignement sur les douleurs orofaciales dans les écoles de dentisterie. **WAJM 2023; 40(10); 1060–1066.**

Mots-clés: Douleurs orofaciales, connaissances, étudiants, éducation dentaire, Nigéria.

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