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Oral health quality of life in children with cerebral palsy: Parental perception

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Introduction: Oral health is essential to the quality of life (QOL) and cannot be dissociated from general health. Cerebral palsy (CP) is the most common form of neuromuscular disability affecting children. Very few studies were found measuring the OHRQOL of children with CP in Saudi Arabia.

Objective: To assess the parents' perception of the oral health-related quality of life (OHRQOL) in children with CP and compare it with normally developing children and to assess the relationship between the OHRQOL and oral health of children with CP.

Materials & Methods: 63 children with CP were recruited from 8 disability centers, and 99 healthy controls were recruited from 5 elementary schools. The ages of the children in both groups were from 6-12 years. The Franciscan Hospital for Children Oral Health-Related Quality of Life (FHC-OHRQOL) was used to measure the OHRQOL and an oral examination was conducted in the schools/ centers of the children to assess the teeth, gingival health, and oral hygiene.

Results: The FHC-OHRQOL showed a significant difference in 3 out of 4 sections indicating lower OHRQOL in the CP group. The examination showed no significant difference in the dental and gingival health and in the level of oral hygiene.

Conclusion: The OHRQOL of children with CP is significantly lower than that of normally developing children although the oral health status of children with CP is not significantly different from that of normally developing children.

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