



Editorial

Dental Treatment and Accessibility for People with Physical Disabilities at the Faculty of Dentistry, Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua

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In 2009, the United Nations categorized persons with disabilities as the population that has physical, mental, intellectual or sensory deficiencies in the short and long term, and that when faced with different barriers, their full and true development is hindered¹. By 2019, the World Health Organization estimated that one billion people have some type of disability, that is, around 15% of the world's population².

The Faculty of Dentistry of the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua has provided various dental treatments since its inauguration in 1991, offering brigades to different institutions of the state. However, there is no permanent program that provides exclusive attention to people with some type of disability. The Law on the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the State of Chihuahua, in its article 9 (2017)³, mentions that all offices, agencies, public or private institutions and especially where public care services are provided, must be accessible and offer preferential attention in the care of people with disabilities. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the University to have a universal architecture throughout its infrastructure that facilitates access for people with disabilities³.

Several studies recognize that oral health is an integral part of people's general health. Inadequate accessibility could hinder the continuity of services that the Faculty of Dentistry offers to people with physical disabilities. A study was carried out evaluating the clinical records with the acronyms *LAD*, *DIF* and *SOF* of people over 18 years of age with and without physical disabilities who have undergone some type of dental treatment in the semesters from January-June and August-December, 2019. In a sample of 8,246 people, the total number of dental treatments was 67,613. Excluding first-time consultations, postgraduate treatments, paediatrics and those performed on children and adolescents under 18 years of age, we obtained a total of 23,301 dental treatments. The result of this study is expected to act as a facilitator for the social inclusion of this group of people.

The number of people with disabilities who seek oral health care at the faculty is only 3%, which is why the total data accumulated during 2019 was included. The most performed treatment was comprehensive diagnosis, with 3,191 cases, followed by simple extraction with 3,764 and obturation with 2,430 cases with glass ionomer (Equia® Forte, gc Corporation, Tokyo, Japan). Regarding disability, these patients underwent 726 treatments, whereas people without disabilities received 22,575. On average, the treatments performed were 2.83 for patients without disabilities and 2.68 for patients with disabilities. The main treatment performed to people with disabilities (60.4%) was tooth extraction. On the contrary, the most common treatment performed to patients without disabilities is comprehensive diagnosis (36%), showing an interest in receiving the best diagnosis of the condition of the stomatological system.

To evaluate the infrastructure, a review of the accessibility regulations for people with disabilities of the State of Chihuahua, the Official Mexican Standard (by its acronym in Spanish, NOM) NOM-030-SSA3-2013 and the 2016 Manual of Technical Standards on Accessibility in Mexico City was carried out. An instrument was developed as a tool in the form of a checklist of 29 areas. The total of elements or items evaluated was 773, including: doors, floor, equipment separation, railings, steps, electrical outlets, hallways, waiting room, tables, dining rooms, drinking fountains, windows, toilet area, counters, rest areas, manhole covers and drains, and ramps. Of the total of 773 items in the Faculty of Dentistry that were evaluated, 45.66% complied with the regulations and 54.33% did not comply.

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