

Abstract

Investigating socioeconomic inequality in the use of dental and oral health services before and after the covid-19 pandemic in Ardabil city

Introduction: According to studies, the outbreak of Covid-19 has led to unprecedented economic and public health crises worldwide, however, oral and dental health inequalities have been largely absent in these studies. Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim of investigating social economic inequality in the use of dental and oral health services before and after the covid-19 pandemic in Ardabil city.

Materials and methods: In this natural quasi-experimental study, the pre-pandemic data includes 436 people, which have been collected in advance in a separate study and the data after the covid-19 pandemic was also collected using a checklist compiled from 436 people randomly. The collected data were entered into the Excel program and refined. Then it was entered into the STATA version 14 software and using statistical analyzes such as t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the averages, as well as economic models to calculate the Gini coefficient and draw the Lorenz curve to estimate the inequality in benefiting from Dental and oral health services were used. A significance level of less than 0.05 was considered.

Results: The survey results showed that benefiting from dental services, including self-assessment of oral and dental health, the number of visits to the dentist 1-2 times in the last year, visits to the dentist every six months and regular brushing, had a significant decrease after covid-19.($P < 0.05$). With increasing age, being female, low education level, being employed or retired, and high income level had a significant relationship with the demand and greater benefit from dental services .($P < 0.05$). Also, poorer people had more unmet needs for dental care services, but could not use these services for various reasons.

Conclusion: The use of dental services in the population of Ardabil has decreased after Covid-19, so it is necessary for the government to take constructive measures in this field with careful planning.

Keywords: Dental Health, Inequality, Dental Care Utilization, Covid-19.