

Why the Majority of Children with Autism Disorder are Facing Oral Health Problems?

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Autism is a disorder that is linked with communication problems and other behaviors that can make dental care difficult. Children with autism have more caries and lost teeth and fewer restored teeth than their peers with normal brain activity. Unfortunately, the autism children could suffer other oral health problems such as bruxism, dental anxiety, and soft tissue trauma.

In children with autism, their teeth structures look like normal children, but they sometimes have muscle weakness around their mouths. They have difficulty chewing, and even sometimes they keep food long without chewing. This is probably one of the reasons that we observe a high prevalence of dental caries in children with autism. Children with autism need the help of others to brush their teeth because of defects in manual skills. Also, incorrect brushing techniques and being uncooperative increase the complications including caries and gingivitis in these children.

Bruxism, dental anxiety, tongue thrusting, and drooling mouth are the important symptoms that children with autism could have. Besides, they may suffer more from dental injuries and soft tissue trauma, possibly due to self-harming behaviors.

There is a significant need that parents should more focus on their children's oral issues with autism problems rather than on their siblings. Parents must pay more attention to their children's dental hygiene. Oral health measures training at home for a child with autism, like many other things, should be followed step-by-step.

Although the lack of social behavior, poor learning, and speech disorders are apparent symptoms in this group of children, the oral health status of these children should be given special attention. In many cases, due to the unfamiliarity of parents with the consequences of dental problems in autistic children, the parents refer to the dentist late while their children are experiencing the inflammation of the gum and advanced caries which are sometimes untreatable.

In the end, it should be noted that changes in oral care practices through oral health programs are also necessary to educate parents and caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorders. A structured program for the autism population at the school and community level will be effective [1-3].

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