

# APRU Global Health Conference 2021

## GLOBAL URBAN HEALTH

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The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

### Abstract No. 136 Abstract Title: Impact of Covid-19 in Seeking Dental Care

Theme: Environment, Health & Active Lifestyle

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### Purpose / Background:

The Coronavirus pandemic brought about a decline in dental health services utilization caused by factors such as fear and anxiety over getting afflicted with the virus, government-placed lockdowns, and lost of jobs, dental services has become the least of people's priorities and instead they focused on their most basic needs.

- People's access to oral care has been greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Unemployment caused by the pandemic led to an economic recession which changed people's priorities over their needs.
- The possibility to fall ill with the Covid-19 virus brought fear to families and health care workers in the dental field.
- The utilization of dental services has been declining due to the recommendation of emergency and urgent cases being the only reason to visit a dental clinic.
- One of the leading concerns of patients that stall their need for dental care is the possible airborne transmission of the disease when inside the dental clinic.

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**Methods:**

The researchers utilized the descriptive survey research design in this study.

This quantitative study made use of a validated questionnaire as data gathering tool distributed among chosen respondents by email.

The target population are employed Filipinos with family(married and with child/ren) and those without family(single) residing in Luzon.

The data collected were graphed, processed and analyzed. Chi-square test in the SPSS (trial version) was used to determine if there was a significant difference in the dental visits before and during the pandemic of the two groups.

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### Results & Conclusions:

- There is no association found between frequency of visit to dentist or dental facility and civil status of respondents .
- The frequency of visit and civil status are independent and does not mean that employed single has more frequent visit than employed who are married.
- The respondents' frequency of visits to the dentist decreased during the pandemic which suggests a moderately negative impact of Covid 19 on seeking dental care.
- The respondents revealed awareness of the importance of dental visits and regular dental check-up during the pandemic, despite economic recession, however their visit to the dental facility is delayed due to fear of the risks of Covid 19 infection and their current financial situation.
- The analysis of survey data done on a total of 271 respondents has shown a decrease in the number of dental clinic visits among the Filipinos living in the Luzon region, with a great 38% admitting to not visiting the dental clinic at all during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- While it is agreed upon that dental checkup is important, a greater number of respondents believes that it poses a great risk of contracting the virus.
- Financial strain brought about by the pandemic also plays a big role in respondents decision making on whether or not they would go for a dental checkup or chose to delay.