

# Dental Care; a Practice affected by Covid 19 Pandemic in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir

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## Abstract

The present study deals with the effects of covid 19 pandemic on dental care and oral hygiene particularly in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. It is basically the extension of covid 19 study conducted earlier. The study talks about the analysis of how corona pandemic impacted dental hygiene. The study has been conducted with broader scope and from variety of socio, political, economic and medical perspectives. It also talks about the decline of dental services accessed by people of Rajouri district due to emergence of corona pandemic. It will help in understanding the effects of covid 19 on the thought making process of people of Rajouri. It further deals with the social mobility and level of integration people of that region adopted to get dental care. The study conducted would also help in analyzing the substitutes used by people in taking care of their oral hygiene.

**Keywords:** People, Dental Care, Oral Hygiene, Pandemic, Study, Oral Disease, Impact, Health, Pandemic, Complex, Wellbeing, Medical Services.

## Introduction

What is Dental care? According to WHO, Oral health is essential to general health and well-being and greatly influences quality of life. It is defined as a state of being free from mouth and facial pain, oral diseases and disorders that limit an individual's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking and psychosocial well-being. Moreover, Dental care is described as the taking care or maintenance of healthy teeth and gums which ultimately contribute in maintaining oral hygiene, it is basically a practice of keeping the mouth clean and fresh so that we can prevent oral diseases and disorders for instance oral hygiene involves practices like brushing, flossing and using mouthwashes which keeps the bacteria away and ultimately keeping oral infections, tooth decaying and gum problems at a distance. As they say, Change is constant and the year 2020 proved it well. The world witnessed the outbreak of Novel Coronavirus and whole earth is under this pandemic since then. The outbreak drastically altered the aspect of human lives. The word 'Pandemic' when described means a global epidemic that spreads to more than one continent.

'Covid-19' – a virus or super virus it is still skeptical? The world can be seen replacing its old terminology with new ones for instance, social integration is altered with social distancing and today it is a practice followed almost in every aspect of life. The world scenario has drastically observed a total change in economic, political, social state in general and human life in particular. The covid-19 has asked some unanswered questions like; are we prepared for the next? Are we capable? Are we sufficient enough? All of a sudden corona came and it affected the whole earth and the world started observing complete lockdown. Suddenly, the "romantic Rome" became the scariest Rome; India well known for its 'atithi devo bhav' behavior became isolated and distant India. U.S.A a superpower was seen powerless. All happened because of covid-19, the virus that has changed the meaning of human life and its existence. The chaos of corona is still unmanageable and unpredictable. The uncertain nature of this virus has raised the question about inefficiency of medical science as there is still no cure for it. Accidently human life stopped and became ineffective. Lockdown imposed has made human life living forcefully inside a cage. This kind of pattern severely impacted every sphere of human life for instance;

**Corona Impact on Health Sector**

Health is said to be one of the most valuable gift from god to man; it's like a hidden treasure but covid attacked it with its unpredictable nature and shot it down. Hospitals were made containment zones even some public buildings came under its service and directly interrupted the other health diseases ultimately, created hindrances in providing health facilities. Majorly health workers and doctors are badly affected and we lost many of them. Masks and sanitizers became our best friend and immunity boosters became our health supplements. All of a sudden, self-love and self-care became the mantra of 2020. World's governance structure has confronted the most serious multidimensional crises in its history. Public health system has emerged as the most critical determinant of nation's ability to fight. Corona arrived on us in such a way that did not allow much time for preparation. If we have to think about future we probably have to deal with uncertainty.

The impact of covid 19 on dentistry industry from the lockdown really is huge and coping with that will be a big challenge for dentists around the world. Patients were restricted to access dental services which contributed in uncertainty level. Some people were even seen unwilling to access oral health care services. Before lockdown event people of that region use to have several options like, dental outlets, dental clinics, dental camps by certain non-governmental organizations and so on but during lockdown there were complete denial to each and every dental service as it is oral care and covid prevention needs mask to be on the face. This study even revealed that covid pandemic has increased high rate of unemployment among dental community and have made them desperate to shift or change their means of earning; giving up on their professional dream for their need of survival.

**Case Study of Miss Reeja**

To understand the situation in detail let's take a case study of a student of graduation. On being asked about the covid situation she said that she was scared to visit dental clinic and outlets as the pandemic wave was more dreadful and serious. She further said that it was difficult for her to even chew food as her tooth needs an immediate extraction. She definitely blames pandemic and cited covid pandemic as a major reason of reluctance to visit any dental clinic because places like these were majorly contaminated. Public places being a hotspot of covid virus created hurdles in availing every kind of medical or dentist services as she believed that exposure to these places would definitely cause her covid infection.

**Conclusion**

To better understand the nature of impact on dentistry sector we need to invest in research and engagement program. Government should work in the dental sector to understand, identify and share healthy practice. It should try to eliminate risks associated with innovation in dentistry. During pandemic the connecting villages to Rajouri district

suffered heavily as there was no proper connecting mode of transportation available. The patients were mostly dependent on the medication that was effective for specific time and needed medical assistance and treatment for patients with severely diagnosed with oral issues. The coronavirus infection includes fever, throat infection, fatigue, dry cough and most severe is involvement of respiratory syndrome. The dentists were too skeptical about dealing with patients during pandemic as the covid virus could spread from droplets through eyes, mouth and nose. Dental treatment includes some instrument like hand pieces, blades and other sharp instruments which could involve blood and saliva droplets which can bring both the dentist and patient at high risk, as per world health organization saying. During pandemic there should be strong medium to spread information which should aware people about oral hygiene and practice as visiting dentists is quite impossible. The government should prioritize public health management system that should talk about the importance of oral care and hygiene. Pandemic has raised so many health issues and majorly it has raised a question on efficiency of medical science. Research and implementation should be of major concern so that dentists can work effectively and resumes dental health care services with proper management. Some questions like; what will happen in the dental sector once the restrictions will be lifted? Will it be safe for dentists to work like normal? The answers are skeptical and still needs to be accurately analysed. Covid 19 has raised uncertainty in every aspect of human life as well as profession. The proper management and functional guidelines are the need of the hour.

**Importance**

The study has been conducted through empirical observational approach and methods like interviews, survey techniques and Questionnaire reveals the complexity raised by Covid 19 pandemic. The comprehensive guideline and complexity in understanding the medical procedure and then accessing them during pandemic was basically a troublesome process for the people of Rajouri District. Due to covid pandemic all the dental clinics have been shut down, making all dentists deprived of their livelihood. In this pandemic situation, dental care has not been anyone's priority, leaving thousands of dentists unemployed. The covid pandemic has caused delays in dental care for those seeking immediate attention leading to further worsening of their situation. Dentists can use their potential by helping in testing covid patients as they are having proper knowledge of head, neck, nose and face. Government should try to use them for treatment purposes; this will increase medical staff and dentists will not suffer financially. Dentists can also assist medical staff for administering oxygen, injection service and alike. This initiative will cause fewer burdens on frontline workers in this difficult time of pandemic. The conducted study will further helps in understanding the need of

educating remote areas of Rajouri district so that they can learn the importance of regular brushing and using fluoride based mouthwashes which will help them in maintaining dental health and hygiene at their end. Further the study tells about the need of organizing dental care camps for villages nearby and should provide personal protective kit, goggles, gloves and shoe covers to dentists for emergency procedures. To take more precautions for dental staff; appointments should be made virtually and treatment should be done with fresh covid report. The government should come up with proper and sustainable way to restart dentistry field. The study also talks about the challenges dentists are facing in treating patients there as mostly people got caught by covid in Rajouri.

#### **Relevance of Study Conducted is as Follows**

1. To obtain the basic idea of dental practice during covid 19 pandemic.
2. To understand the patient's mindset this will ultimately help in understanding patient's requirement.
3. To generate patient specific approach and flexible treatment.
4. To identify the concerns and approach involved in dental care services.
5. To analyze how dental sector and dentists suffered during pandemic.
6. To study how dental sector suffered heavily even financially.
7. To study means used by people to maintain oral health and hygiene.
8. To study about new tools and technology involved in the treatment of patients which will minimize infection risks.
9. To study the contribution of dentist in testing covid virus.
10. To study the potential of dentists and utilize their ability in the treatment of covid.
11. To obtain efficient and effective ways of maintain oral health.
12. To study the overall methods of promoting dental hygiene in remote areas of Rajouri.
13. To understand the need of resuming dental camps for needy ones.
14. To study the urgent need of awareness camps and demonstrating practices declaring proper management of oral care at home.
15. To educate the villages of Rajouri the importance of regular brushing, using fluoride based mouthwashes.
16. To understand the need of the hour while assisting patients and providing them care they need.
17. To acknowledge the problems of patients and aware dental sector about it.
18. To raise the literacy and awareness level among people of Rajouri and ultimately help in addressing their dental needs.

19. To understand the need of introducing new technologies in order to prevent dentists as well as patients.

#### **Review of Literature**

The present study deals with dental care practices and oral hygiene which got severely affected by corona pandemic in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. The conducted study also involves a case study of a student of graduation. It is basically an analysis of situation of dentistry and its impact on people and their mindset regarding dental services. The information obtained about dental practices involved social research methods like interviews, observation, and survey. It is conducted to investigate about cause of reluctance and impact of covid on the people of Rajouri. The sources for the literature review included newspaper article, research articles, magazines, books, interviews, surveys and internet sources. The review focused on two fundamental areas; first, if developed target approach, the patients can be monitored carefully and second, proper work guidelines should be into action so that no one can be deprived of dental services. The above study is descriptive design that explains the hurdles in dental social setting and treating patients during covid lockdown. It further explains the mindset of people and shows the concerns patients have while seeking dental services. The referred sources are primary sources majorly and all the information obtained is first handed with holistic book view.

#### **Methodology**

The research techniques used to conduct this study are observation, interview, survey and questionnaire. Both primary and secondary sources are taken into consideration.

#### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this research is to throw light on the impact corona pandemic has on the mindset of people and how reluctant they were in seeking dental services in Rajouri district. The purpose is to find the reasons behind not taking dental care services and what exactly was the scenario of dental care during the pandemic times.

#### **Acknowledgement**

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independently conducted research is more like a journey full of new experience; new findings and they feel grown as person. As being a student of sociology (Author), and Dentistry (Co-Author), it's a matter of pride for author to be a part of research like this; Author and co-author really hope that it would contribute further in learning the nature and complex character of pandemic guidelines. Author and co-author would also like to thank Miss Reeja for giving time and for being such a wonderful support throughout this magical journey of new findings and learning.

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