Reviewer's report

Title: Assessment of oral self-care in patients with periodontitis: A pilot study in a dental school clinic in Japan

Version: 1 Date: 29 June 2009

Reviewer: Jacques Vanobbergen

Reviewer's report:


Review

Both minor and major revisions are requested.

The authors wanted to assess the oral health behaviours and perceptions of patients attending a dental clinic using a short questionnaire.

Abstract:
Indicate the study design early in the section ‘methods’: a cross-sectional study design was used.

Objectives:

Methods:
Subjects: mention the number of participants and explain how the study size was arrived at.

Start a section ‘data collection’ in the third paragraph: ‘After collection of full medical and dental histories ....’

Data collection: there is a need for a more structured section using three subdivisions: ‘clinical oral examination’, ‘questionnaire’ and ‘patients records’.

For the questionnaire variables: provide the reader with details on the methods used to compute the variables and how they were used in the analysis.

Clinical variables: ‘The presence or absence of supragingival dental plaque...’: PCR is described as a dichotomised yes or no variable. How do we have to interpret the mean PCR as reported in the section results? Provide the reader with some more details of the method of assessment (measurement) of dental plaque. PCR is a rather less frequently used measurement instrument and the reference is old and difficult to consult.

Statistical analysis: indicate the rational for using non-parametric tests.
Results:
Remark on table 2: see above concerning the PCR
Oral hygiene: ‘three times or more’ in stead of ‘more than three times’.
Table 4: frequency of between meal snacks: the total amount of percentages does not reach 100%.

Not all tables are based on the full number of participants n=65?. In case of missing answers, indicate the number of participants for each variable of interest and report the number and percentage of missing answers.
The tables give an idea of the relationship between the questionnaire variables and plaques scores, but no information is given on the direction of this relationship. Report mean plaque scores for the different subgroups.

Discussion:
Indeed, the present study assessed the oral health related behaviour and perceptions of patients with periodontitis, but the study did not investigate the validity of the questionnaire. Did the questionnaire really measure the oral health related behaviour of patients? Information bias?

At the end of the second paragraph the authors stated that the results provided additional evidence that interdental cleaning should be emphasized in the development of periodontal care plans. None of the results reported in the present study support this statement!

Prof dr Jacques Vanobbergen

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests