

DENTAL SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY FOR PATIENTS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS

Project implementation period: 2012

Aims of the study. To assess the dental service accessibility for patients with mobility impairments.

Tasks:

1. To assess the possibilities of dental institutions to provide dental services for patients with mobility impairments.
2. To assess the point of view of patients with mobility impairments towards the dental service accessibility in healthcare institutions in Lithuania.

Material and methods. In 2012 March-December a quantitative descriptive analytic study was carried out in the Institute of Hygiene. During the questionnaire survey 304 representatives of public and private dental institutions and 292 patients with mobility impairments were surveyed.

Results. The majority (82.2%) of the institutions that participated in the study confirmed they have provided dental services to patients with mobility impairments. Even though a considerable part of the institutions stated that the conditions for providing dental services for patients with mobility impairments are created, more than one third indicated to have experienced difficulties upon visiting the institutions. In analysing the conditions created for providing dental services for patients with mobility impairments in the institution it was determined that 47.4% of the institutions have ramps installed, 35.9% of institutions have doorsteps or platforms removed, while 29.6% have armrests installed.

The dental service accessibility regarding patients with mobility impairments is problematic (a total of 70.9% of the respondent visits create problems): 39.7% need an accompanying person, 29.8% require transportation or transportation services, 49.7% experience financial difficulties, 81.3% indicate health issues, 26.0% of the respondents claim that the waiting room is not adapted for patients with mobility impairments, while 21.9% mentioned toilets not adapted for the disabled.

Conclusion. The dental service accessibility for patients with mobility impairments is problematic, therefore, it is necessary to improve the provision of service for this socially vulnerable group, to improve mobile dental service provision, to raise awareness of people with mobility impairments about the provided transportation services for people who have mobility impairments due to illness or old age, and/or cannot use means of public or individual transportation due to insufficient income.

Contacts: Dr. Rolanda Valintėlienė, e-mail rolanda.valinteliene@hi.lt