

Effect of Health Messages during Dental Treatment in Improving COVID-19 Preventive Health Behaviour: A Randomised Controlled Trial

Normaliza Ab Malik, Azlan Jaafar, Aws Hashim Ali Al-Khadim

Objectives. Preventive health behaviour is essential during dental visits to ensure the environment is safe for dental healthcare providers and patients attending the dental clinic. This study investigates the effectiveness of informational health messages during dental treatment to enhance COVID-19 preventive health behaviour among dental patients.

Methods. A randomised controlled trial was conducted among patients visiting dental practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. The test group was given an audio device containing health messages related to COVID-19 and the importance of preventive health behaviour. A piece of relaxing instrumental music accompanied the information. The control group was given the same relaxing instrumental music only without any health information. A questionnaire, comprising five sections, was adapted and extracted from the WHO resources, guidance and protocol to suit the study objectives related to pandemic knowledge and preventive health behaviour.

Results. A total of 130 patients participated in the study, with 65 patients in each group. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 77 years old. More than half of the participants were female (65.4%), and 91.5% claimed no chronic illnesses. More than half of the participants in the test group performed hand cleaning behaviour immediately after treatment (62.5%) and at the counter after completing the treatment (52.8%) compared to the control group. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups. Both groups showed significant differences in their preventive health behaviour before and after treatment ($P < 0.001$). Higher knowledge and self-efficacy levels were found in the test group compared to the control group, but there were no significant differences between the two groups ($P > 0.05$). There was a significant difference in the awareness level between the test and control group ($P = 0.007$).

Conclusion. An informational health message delivered using an audio device during dental treatment was effective in improving COVID-19 preventive health behaviour among dental patients. Thus, this study has shown the potential effect of using an audio device during dental treatment to disseminate health information, particularly during unprecedented health events such as the COVID-19 outbreak.

Keywords: COVID-19, music, dental patient, behaviour

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Correspondence to:

Dr Normaliza Ab Malik, Associate Professor, Faculty of Dentistry, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, liza_amalik@usim.edu.my, liza_arie2004@yahoo.com
