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Review Article

Dental Treatment on Wheels-A Way to Reach the Unreached

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Abstract

India is the second-most populous country in the world with an extensive rural population. The extensive rural population, school children and urban slum dwellers are deprived of even the basics dental services through there is continuous advancement in the field of dentistry. Mobile and portable dental services are a viable option to take sophisticated oral health services to the doorsteps of the underserved population. Mobile and portable dental clinics can answer the problem to the geriatric population by bringing the treatment near them. A mobile dental clinic is a good option. Increasing dental manpower can best be utilized for the promotion of oral health through mobile and portable dental services.

Introduction

India is a vast country with a population of more than one billion. Government hospitals and establishments treat 25% to 30% of the population for their dental ailments, while the remainder seeks treatment through private clinics. Unlike stationary dental clinics, mobile dental clinics provide greater physical access to dental care for the medically underserved population in poor urban and remote rural communities and many existing dental services at lower or no cost to the user. Mobile and portable dental services may offer a viable option to address the issues of oral healthcare delivery for an extensive underserved population in a developing country like India with scarce resources. Mobile and portable dental services provide an innovative solution in bringing care to the doorsteps of the underprivileged rural population who have a lack of access for basic dental services. This highlights the fact that the existing oral health care delivery in India that is predominantly by private dentists in affluent urban localities on a fee for service basis has not significantly contributed in the promotion of the oral health in the general population, especially the extensive rural population. Portable dental equipment is defined as any non-facility in which dental equipment, utilizes in the practices of dentistry, is transported to and utilized on a temporary basis at an out-of-office location, including but not limited to other dentist office, patients home, schools and nursing homes or other institution [1-3].

Application of Mobile and Portable Dental Services

Practical application of mobile, portable or hybrid systems may be performed in multiple situations, such as:

- Educating school children regarding oral health
- Dental services to people who are homeless, temporarily displaced or migrants
- School and community dental health program like sealant application program
- Providing both preventive and curative services in the homebound setting.
- Screening of the population for various oral diseases.
- Supplementing the medical services in case of any emergency relief situation or vaccination program [1,4].

Uses

- The mobile dental clinics eliminate the distance criteria by bringing the patient closer to the services.
- Mobile dental van is helpful in-school program, retirement homes, rural communities, corporate employers, community agencies and different organizations.
- As mobile dental clinics do not require very high capital investments to start, such clinics solve the problem of transportation for the patients.
- These clinics make their services available at multiple sites. Hence maximum number of patients can utilize the services provided by the mobile dental clinics [5,6].

Equipments

- The mobile dental clinics are equipped with dental chairs. These could be either one or more than one dental chairs according to the usage and demand. The dental chair can be hydraulic or automated with the spittoon, tumbler, air and water connections, with adequate drainage and auto-flush systems.
- Airrotor, Micro-motor and Scaler with scaling tips are provided for the efficient restorations and cleaning of teeth. Micromotor is also useful for minor denture adjustments. Chair lightning is provided for illumination and better viewing.
- Light cure unit is also installed for esthetic restorations.
- X-ray viewer also attached to the chair for the better viewing of the radiograph.



- e. An autoclave unit is also a part of the mobile clinics as it keeps on sterilizing the instruments so that it can be used again for patients.
- f. Glass bed sterilizers are used to sterilize root canal files and burs.
- g. A water tank of 400 litres capacity is fitted on the ceiling of the dental van.
- h. Oxygen cylinder is a must to be installed in the mobile clinic in case any emergency arises.
- i. To educate the society about the proper dental care various education models, TV and DVD player are also kept in the mobile dental clinics.

In a developing country like India, oral health needs to be addressed very extensively as the people are still not aware of its importance [7-10].

Conclusion

To achieve the target of reaching the unreached, a fully equipped mobile dental clinic with competent dentist and assistants are required to serve the people in need at their doorsteps. In a developing country like India where there is still a large number of rural populations that cannot access the basic dental services, the mobile dental clinic is the solution. These services are an effective adjunct to the dental colleges and hospitals to impart basic oral healthcare like oral check-ups, simple restorations, extractions and patient education.

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