

User Attitudes Toward Sustainable Dentistry: A Descriptive Study in Chile

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Introduction

The lack of knowledge in sustainable dentistry hinders progress toward eco-friendly dental practices. Understanding patients' perceptions is crucial for improving care and ensuring treatment approaches align with their needs and expectations.

Objective: Describe the attitudes of dental clinic users regarding sustainable dentistry in Talca in 2023.



Main Square, Talca

Materials and Methods

Study design: Descriptive observational study. Patients who received dental care in the public and private clinics in Talca-Chile.

Time: August 2023

Variables: Attitudes towards sustainable dentistry, gender, age, educational level, employment, last visit to the dentist, and self-perception of oral health.

Ethics: Ethics approval for the study was given by the Scientific Ethical Committee, Health Sciences Faculty, University of Talca.

Data analysis: exploratory, univariate, and bivariate. (R y Rstudio).



Waiting Room, Dental Clinic, University of Talca

References

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Results

In total 187 participants participated in the study, 137 (74%) of whom were female. Their mean age was 38 years (range 17 – 75 years). One hundred (54%) had received secondary education. Most of the participants (159 - 86%) had public health insurance. Seventy four percentage (40%) perceived their oral health as good.

Regarding attitudes, participants showed positive attitudes toward sustainable dentistry, and were willing to commit to it. However, they did not commit to sustainable dentistry if the treatment involved the aesthetic appearance of anterior teeth.

The bivariate analyses between the outcomes and age, gender, education, oral health, and pain were performed. Only Attitude and education were significant ($p < 0.05$).

Demographic characteristics	n	%	Demographic characteristics	n	%
Total	187		Last visit to the dentist		
Gender			Less than 12 months	104	55.6
Female	138	73.8	More than 12 months but less than 2 years	37	19.8
Male	48	25.7	More than 2 years	46	24.6
Nonbinary	1	0.5	Frequency of dental visits		
Age (years) Mean (SD)	38	15.9	Never	5	2.7
Level of education			Hardly ever	76	40.6
Primary	19	10.2	Sometimes	66	35.3
Secondary	101	54.0	Always	40	21.4
Undergraduate	62	33.2	Payment for dental treatment		
No formal	5	2.7	Counted	101	54.0
Employment status			Free	50	26.7
Student	47	25.1	Credit	26	13.9
Dependent worker	45	24.1	Promissory note	10	5.3
Housewife	34	18.2	Oral health		
Independent worker	27	14.4	Very good	5	2.7
Unemployed	20	10.7	Good	76	40.6
Retired	14	7.5	Regular	82	43.9
Health insurance			Bad	21	11.2
Public	161	86.1	Very bad	3	1.6
Private	15	8.0	Feel pain	50	26.7
Army	4	2.1	Pain level Mean (SD)	4.7	2.4
Other	7	3.7	Recruitment		
			CESFAM José Dionisio Astaburuaga	80	42.8
			UTalca Dental Clinics Center	75	40.1
			Web	32	17.1

Variables	n	Mean	95% CI	Min	Max
Attitudes towards sustainable dentistry	187	4.3	4.2 4.4	2.5	5.0
Time and convenience	187	4.0	3.9 4.1	1.6	5.0
Money	187	3.5	3.3 3.6	1.0	5.0
Duration	187	3.4	3.3 3.5	1.0	5.0
Esthetic	187	3.0	2.9 3.1	1.0	5.0
Health	187	4.0	3.9 4.1	1.0	5.0

Conclusions

This was the first research project on sustainable dentistry in Chile.

The results showed a positive attitude towards sustainable dentistry.

Further studies will be required before guidelines, promoting sustainable practices, and evaluating which areas to focus-on can be formulated.



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