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A study on parental acceptance towards the use of dental therapists in Malaysian private sectors (Article)

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Abstract

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Introduction: The objective of this study was to assess parental acceptance and factors that influenced their perceptions towards the use of dental therapists in providing treatment to children in private dental practice settings. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted on randomly selected parents of 11-year-old schoolchildren in Selangor using a self-administered structured questionnaire. The survey consisted of three sections: socio-demographic characteristics, dental service utilisation and parental acceptance towards dental therapists in providing seven types of preventive and operative dental procedures. **Results:** The response rate was 83.1%. Overall, most parents regarded dental therapists providing dental care to their children in private dental care settings as acceptable, particularly on preventive treatment, namely 'seeking advice on oral hygiene care' (87.8%) and 'applying topical fluoride' (83.2%). In the multivariate analysis, younger parents and those who had preferences over private sectors were most likely to accept at least four dental procedures to be rendered to their children by dental therapists. Overall, respondents who were younger (OR = 1.40, 95% CI = 1.62, 1.92), lived in urban locality (OR = 1.77, 95% CI = 1.28, 2.45) and had a recent dental visit (OR = 1.51; 95% CI = 1.10, 2.07) were more likely to have an overall positive perceptions towards dental therapists. **Conclusion:** Most parents regarded dental therapists providing care to their children in private dental settings as acceptable and this was associated with their age, place of residence and past dental experiences. © 2020 UPM Press. All rights reserved.

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