Child Abuse and Neglect: Role of a dentist in diagnosis

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Abstract

Child Abuse and Neglect is a global issue. A dental practioner has an important role when it comes to diagnosis and reporting of CAN. Majority of injuries in a child is encountered in the oro facial region, making it important for the dentist to look through the abnormality and trace the origin of the injuries. All a dentist needs is proper training and awareness regarding the issue. If a child can be helped at the earliest stage, it can surely be of great contribution towards their life as well as the society. Child Abuse (CA) is affected as any physical or psychological harm inflicted upon children. The most commonly affected anatomical region in these cases is the orofacial complex, thereby placing dentists in a dominant position for detecting CA. The statistical figures referred to CA are high, and many cases go unreported.

Introduction:

A search was made of the PubMed (MEDLINE), ScienceDirect, LILACS and SciELO databases for articles published up until March 2019, involving analytical observational and descriptive studies relevant to the objectives of our study. All articles were independently reviewed by two authors.

Conclusion:

Although dentists are able to detect injuries, there is a great lack of knowledge about how to report cases of CA to the authorities. It is interesting to establish guidelines for the detection and reporting of suspicious cases. Improved training in forensic and legal dentistry is needed, together with the establishment of detection and reporting protocols. The clinical signs detected in the case of CA and neglect includes untreated caries, poor oral hygiene, traumatisms, burns, lacerations and biting. The recognition of such signs and correct case history compilation are essential for the detection of CA.