

Use of animals-assisted therapy in a patient with ECC

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Introduction

Early Childhood Caries (ECC) affects the primary dentition of infants and pre-school children. One or more teeth are affected, with rapid progression in the dental tissue. This condition is associated with poor oral hygiene and high fermentable-carbohydrates diet among other multiple factors. Oral examination, education, preventive measures and teeth rehabilitation pose multiple challenges to professionals involved with these issues and are also a source of distress for these young patients. Since deep sedation procedures are not readily available everywhere, we report a case of successful use of a behavior modification technique (BMT) and emphasize the need to exploring among different strategies currently available.

Case Report

- 4-year-old patient, female, Frankl 1 scale
- Early Childhood Caries
- Without any previous dental care.
- first phase dentition, high cariogenic risk, caries activity (ceod 11)
- Generalized gingivitis induced by dental biofilm

1. First approach
2. Animal-assisted therapy
3. Preventive treatment
4. Restorative treatment

1. First Approach

A preliminary intraoral exam was seriously limited due to child's behavior (Frankl1). Different BMT were assessed to reduce patient stress and fulfill dental objectives.



2. Animal Assisted Therapy

In the second session the patient sat in the dental chair with the therapy dog, demonstrating a change in the patient's behavior, allowing the intraoral exam, photography and prophylaxis to be performed.

Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) was the most effective one for this patient, changing her behavior score to Frankl 3, allowing full dental examination



3. Preventive treatment

- Prophylaxis and fluoride application.
- Sealants on teeth: 7.5

4. Restorative treatment

Restorations on teeth 5.3-5.4-6.3-6.4-6.5-7.3-7.4-7.5-8.3-8.4-8.5

Conclusion

This case exemplifies the contributions of BMT to improve oral assessment, preventive measures and rehabilitation of caries, such as fluoride applications, sealants and direct restorations among children with behavior disorders. BMT could become a reliable and effective technique to improve the feasibility and quality of dental care when other procedures are contraindicated or unavailable.

References

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