

THE INTERFACE BETWEEN MENTAL AND ORAL HEALTH: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH - LITERATURE REVIEW

Laura Cardamoni

Lívia Modenese Targa; Jéssica Gimenes de Araújo Lopes; Marcus Vinicius Tenuta Araújo³; Silvia Helena Marques Padovan Alves Meira; Eliana de Souza Bastos Mazuqueli Pereira.

RESUMO

ABSTRACT Introduction: The relationship between oral health and mental health, especially in the context of depression, represents an increasingly relevant yet underexplored field of study. Mental disorders significantly compromise the quality of life and psychosocial functioning of individuals. People with depression frequently exhibit low motivation and energy, leading them to neglect their oral hygiene. Furthermore, psychotropic medications can cause xerostomia, contributing to the exacerbation of oral conditions such as dental caries and periodontitis. Studies indicate that poor oral health can intensify depressive symptoms due to chronic pain, impact on self-esteem, and social interaction. Disorders such as anxiety and depression can aggravate or favor the development of bruxism, which may lead to temporomandibular disorders (TMD), causing severe orofacial discomfort and tooth wear, thus compromising both the oral health and the psychological well-being of the individual. Objective: This study aims to investigate the complex relationship between mental health and oral health, highlighting the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in the prevention and treatment of dental and mental conditions. Material and

Methods: This study consists of a narrative literature review, conducted using publications indexed in the PubMed database over the last two years. The search was performed using the descriptors "mental health" and "oral health," including original articles, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses.

Results: Individuals with depression and anxiety present a significantly higher risk of developing dental caries and periodontal disease, primarily due to poorer oral hygiene and a lower frequency of dental care. Moreover, in individuals over 50 years of age, chronic stress and depression are associated with increased dental plaque, gingivitis, and elevated cortisol levels, reinforcing the link between mental health, immune response, and oral health impairment. Research highlights the relationship between the oral microbiome and mental disorders, suggesting that oral dysbiosis is associated with systemic inflammation and may play a role in the pathophysiology of depression. The maintenance of oral hygiene and the management of periodontal disease may promote mental well-being by attenuating inflammatory and neurochemical processes associated with depression. Evidence indicates significant differences in the structure of the oral microbial community between individuals with mild and severe depression, showing that changes in the diversity, evenness, and composition of this microbiome are directly related to the severity of depressive symptoms. This complex relationship between oral and mental health, particularly in the context of depression, requires an interdisciplinary approach. Dentists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other healthcare professionals must work in an integrated manner, recognizing that oral healthcare can play a relevant role in the prevention and management of mental disorders, just as mental health directly influences oral hygiene habits, immune response, and the quality of life of individuals. Conclusion: The integration of oral and mental health is fundamental for a more effective and humanized approach in clinical practice. Awareness regarding this connection should be encouraged in healthcare services, reinforcing the importance of a holistic perspective for comprehensive patient care.

Palavras-chave: Oral Health Mental Health Depression Holistic Health.