

Lockdown on Dental Trauma?

Lessons Learned from an Urgent Dental Care Centre during the COVID-19 Restrictions

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Introduction

The restrictions introduced to stop the spread of COVID-19 resulted in the suspension of all routine dentistry in March 2020. In Scotland, NHS dental practices closed for a three-month period while designated Urgent Dental Care Centres (UDCCs) provided all NHS emergency dental care for the local population. This provided a unique opportunity to analyse the presentation and management of complex dental trauma within NHS Lothian, a population of over 900,000¹, and identify valuable lessons.

Aim and Objectives

Aim:

- To assess the presentation and management of dental trauma to the NHS Lothian UDCC during the heaviest COVID-19 restrictions.

- Objectives:**
- To build a profile of trauma patients
 - Identify the aetiology of injuries
 - Identify the most common diagnoses
 - Determine compliance with SDCEP guidance
 - Guide service provision in the event of further restrictions

Method

Retrospective clinical record evaluation of all dental trauma patients triaged by the UDCC from 24th March until 22nd June 2020.

Data recorded for all patients included:

- Patient details
- Nature of injury
- Provisional diagnosis
- Management

Further data was recorded for those requiring face-to-face assessment:

- Clinical and radiographic findings
- Definitive diagnosis
- Management

Gold standard: SDCEP guidance 'Management of Acute Dental Problems During COVID-19 Pandemic'²

- Compliance was determined by assessing whether the provisional diagnosis matched the correct management pathway:

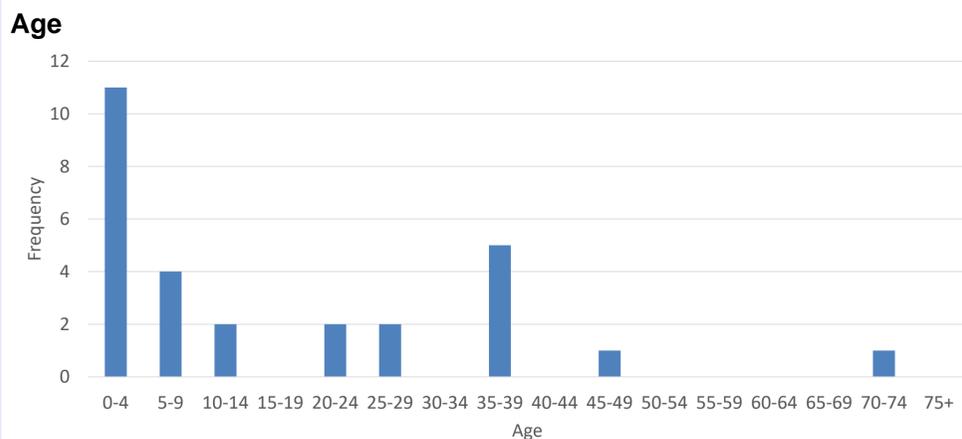
'Emergency care'

'Urgent care'

'Advice and self help'

Results

- 28 patients were triaged with dental trauma in the NHS Lothian UDCC between the specified dates.

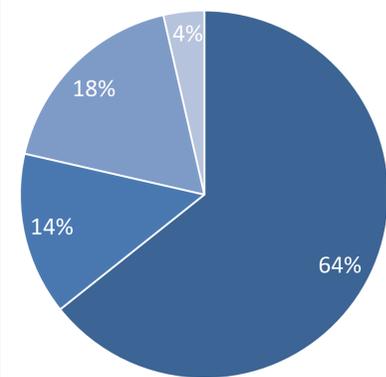


Registration status

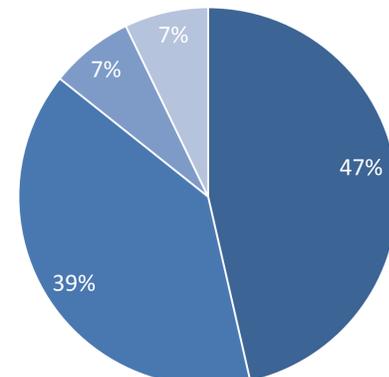
Registered	82% (n=23)
Unregistered	11% (n=3)
Not recorded	7% (n=2)

References (1) statistics.gov.scot | Lothian [Internet]. Statistics.gov.scot. 2020 [cited 11 November 2020]. Available from: <https://statistics.gov.scot/atlas/resource?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fid%2Fstatistical-geography%2F508000024> (2) Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme. Management of Acute Dental Problems During COVID-19 Pandemic. 2020. (3) Eilert-Petersson E, Andersson L, Sörensen S. Traumatic oral vs. non-oral injuries. An epidemiologic study during one year in a Swedish county. Swed Dent J 1997;21:55-68. (4) Day P, Djemal S, Albadri S. Permanent Dentition Acute Management of Traumatic Injuries and Follow-up Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic. 2020

Referral Source



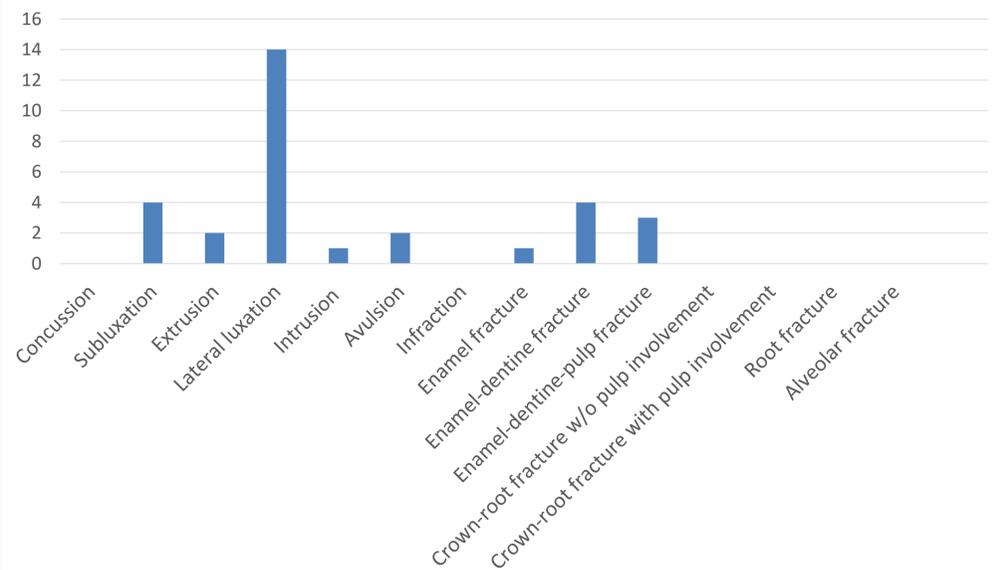
Aetiology of Injuries



■ GDP ■ NHS24 ■ Self-referral ■ OMFS ■ Fall ■ Sport ■ Physical violence ■ Not recorded

Provisional Diagnoses

- The most common provisional diagnoses was lateral luxation.
- Over one third of patients (36%) experienced multiple injuries.
- Almost one third of patients (32%) required medical attention.



SDCEP Management Outcome

'Urgent care' pathway
n = 4

'Advice and self help' pathway
n = 24

75% compliance

Conclusions

- Injuries presenting to the UDCC appeared more complex than anticipated suggesting that patients with minor dental injuries appropriately received self-help advice from their GDPs without needing onward referral.
- The majority of dental trauma occurred in younger age groups which is in keeping with the literature.³
- Falls and sporting injuries were the most common aetiology yet no injuries were related to contact sports or traffic accidents. This is perhaps suggestive of compliance with the COVID-19 travel and contact sport restrictions.
- The long-term impact of the restrictions on dental trauma outcomes will take time to manifest, however, adhering to the SDCEP and revised trauma guidelines, 'Acute Management of Traumatic Injuries and Follow-up Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic'⁴, we can hope to minimise adverse long-term outcomes.
- The service demonstrated that with flexibility and cohesive team work, rapid service changes can be implemented in response to demand and changing landscape.
- The project supports the maintenance of face-to-face appointments to ensure rapid, effective dental trauma diagnosis and management should stricter restrictions return, especially considering the impact of timely intervention on the long-term prognosis.