

Importance of oral health care in times of COVID-19

Importância dos cuidados com a saúde oral em tempos de COVID-19

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Dear Editor,

The infection caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in the host cells occurs by interaction of cleaved viral protein spike with the receptors of angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) and of transmembrane serine protease 2 (TMPRSS2). The presence of ACE2 and TMPRSS2 in the salivary glands make them a reservoir for SARS-CoV-2, leading to cell endocytosis and the viral replication cycle. This knowledge is relevant to better understand and develop strategies to mitigate contamination by droplets.⁽¹⁾

Since the oral cavity is closely related to the progression of the coronavirus 2019 disease (COVID-19), and the oral health status is associated to severity of the condition,⁽²⁾ adopting preventive measures, such as maintenance of oral health by chemical-mechanical control of oral microbiota, becomes a relevant issue.⁽³⁻⁶⁾

The medical literature has shown the use of broad-spectrum antiseptic mouthwashes demonstrated laboratory results and clinical efficacy in reducing the viral load and symptoms of COVID-19⁽³⁻⁶⁾ (Table 1). The evidence is as recent as the pandemic.

Therefore, it seems maintenance of oral health, with the correct strategies, does not lead to contraindications or evidence of non-effectiveness in prevention of COVID-19.

Table 1. List of antiseptic mouthwashes used and their respective benefits in treating COVID-19 patients

Antiseptic mouthwash	Benefits
Povidone-iodine (PVP-I) ⁽³⁾	Reducing viral load
Chlorhexidine ⁽³⁾	Reducing viral load
β-cyclodextrin/Citrox ⁽⁴⁾	Reducing viral load
Hydrogen peroxide ⁽³⁾	Reducing viral load
Anionic phthalocyanine derivative (APD) – (Phthalox®) ^(5,6)	Reducing viral load, reducing symptoms, reducing severity of disease, reducing length of hospital stay

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