

Impacts of COVID-19 on Dentistry: A Review of Literature

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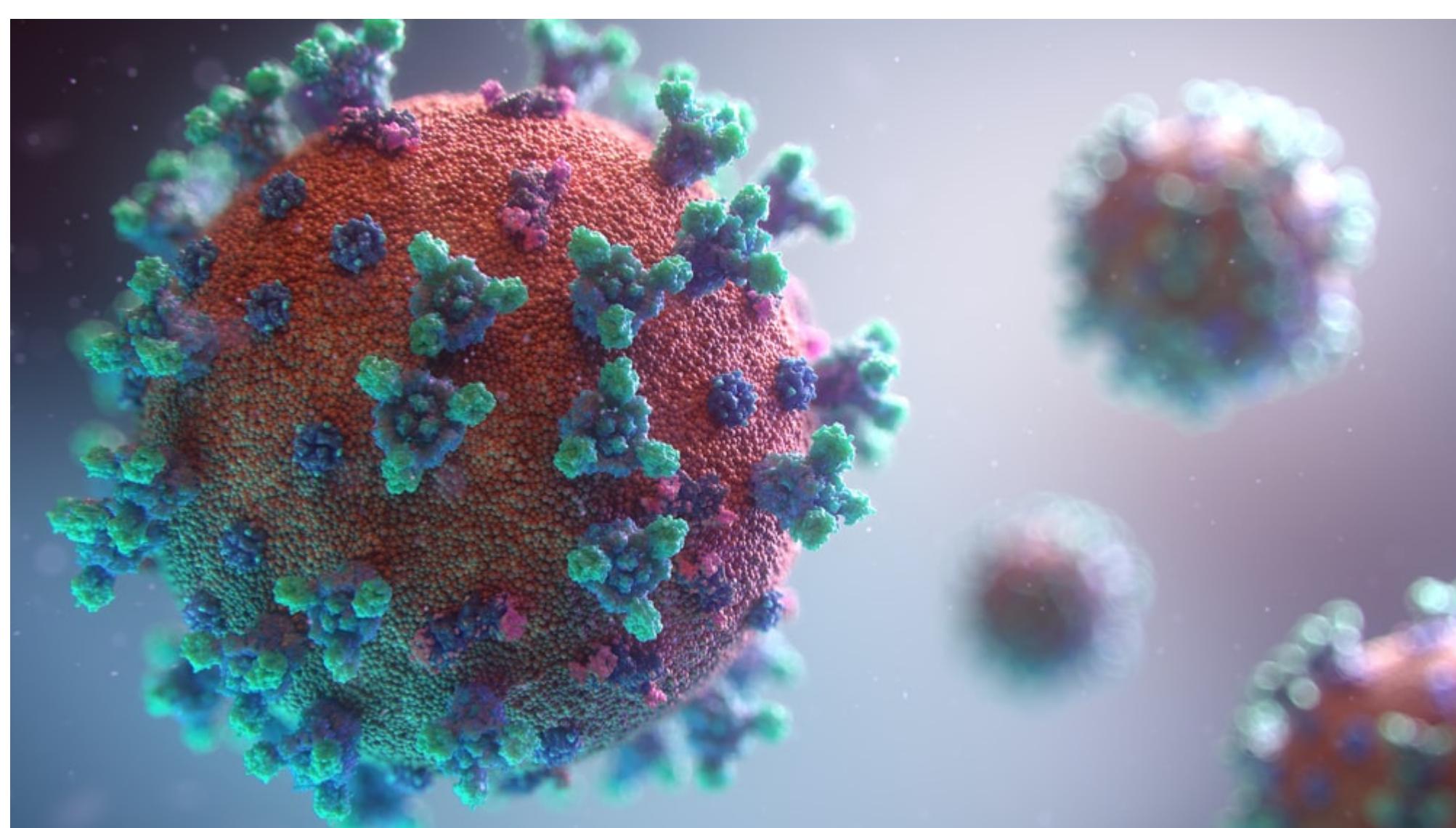
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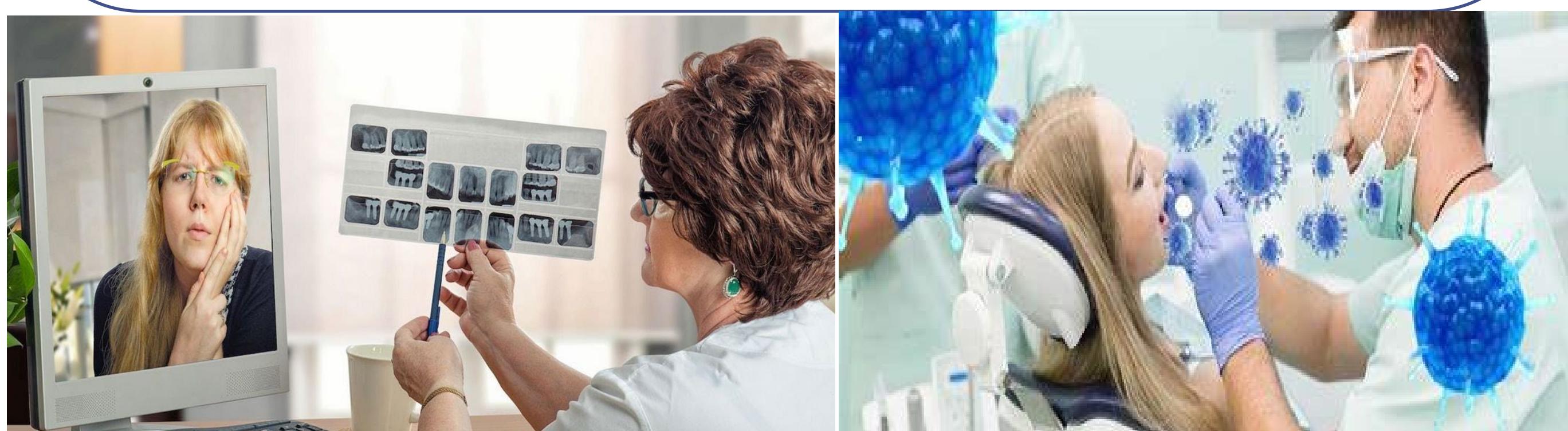


INTRODUCTION

- Coronavirus infectious disease (COVID-19) has profound impacts on the healthcare industry, including dentistry.
- Dentists have always been taught how to protect themselves and their patients from potential blood-borne pathogens, but the Coronavirus pandemic has brought a new unprecedented challenge to the world of dentistry. The effects of COVID-19 are quite profound on the dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and dental care. During the lockdown, because only emergency dental care was allowed, it impacted the routine dental care of the patients.
- Populations with low socio-economic, minority groups, older, uneducated and uninsured rural people are most vulnerable to chronic and infectious diseases such as COVID-19 and access to care is limited to such people.



- As a result of COVID-19, the preventative oral care and school-based programs for children were suspended which resulted in higher risk of caries in the younger population.
- Although COVID-19 outbreak has caused difficulties providing dental care, it expands the opportunities for dentists to deliver non-aerosolizing treatments and provide digital consultations.
- However, there is still a gap in clinical research and the need for enough knowledge to manage the crisis caused by COVID-19.



METHODS AND MATERIALS

- A narrative review was carried out on SARS COV-2 and its effects on dentistry via PubMed and Google scholar.
- Eligibility criteria includes articles published in 2019 to 2021, written in English and performed only on human subjects.
- A survey with a questionnaire with questions including: personal information, type of dental care provided during quarantine, if emergencies increased, the dental office biosafety routine, among others.
- The levels of concern about the impact of quarantine on dental care and patient oral health conditions and the economic impact on dental practices were evaluated using a 0- to 10-point scale.

RESULTS

- Based on the evidence described in this literature reflects the shift in dental practice and patient's dental care.
- A decline in patient's oral hygiene led to an increase in emergency dental procedures reported by 44.1% of dentists mostly due to unavailability of routine dental care which in turn increased dental anxiety and stress among patients.
- The main causes of urgency/emergency appointments were toothache, dental trauma, and broken restorations, besides the breakage of orthodontic appliances and temporomandibular disorders.
- The accumulation of data from various literature shows that it is crucial to change the way dentistry was carried out until now due to the risk of COVID-19 infection.
- Clinically, the use of a rubber dam is essential. FFP2 (or N95) and FFP3 respirators, if compared to surgical masks, provide greater protection for health workers against viral respiratory infections.

CONCLUSION

- The purpose of quarantine is to reduce social contact so that the spread of the virus decreases, thus preventing those hospitals from being overwhelmed. On the other hand, self-employed professionals need to work to maintain their companies and families.
- The complications from COVID-19 pandemic have short term effects and some might have long term effects on dentistry.
- The prevention of cross contamination of the infection and its spread can be conducted by various ways discussed in the article, tele-dentistry is one of them.
- Tele-dentistry helps address the lack of access to care during and after pandemic with disadvantaged and rural communities.
- It is helpful in the patient education and consultation regarding their dental concerns.
- Dentists reported a high level of concern about the economic impact caused by quarantine.

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