



FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION APPLICATION

Title: Access to Dental Care Services for People with Disabilities in Europe

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Category: From Science to Society

Problem (max. 50 words):

People with disabilities face significant challenges in accessing dental care, including physical, financial, and informational barriers. As a result, they often experience poorer oral health outcomes and a higher risk of untreated dental conditions across Europe.

Unmet Need (max. 50 words):

Despite equal rights frameworks, many European countries lack adapted dental care pathways and infrastructure for people with disabilities. There is insufficient data and limited awareness about the unmet dental care needs of children and adults with disabilities.

Project Description (max. 200 words):

This project explores disparities in access to dental care services for individuals with disabilities in Europe, with a focus on children under 15 years old. Using Eurostat EU-SILC microdata, it investigates how disability status affects the likelihood of receiving needed dental examinations or treatments.

The clinical question is whether children with disabilities are less likely to access dental care compared to non-disabled peers. The analysis considers various contributing factors, including socioeconomic status, geographic location, and healthcare system barriers.

The project aims to generate robust evidence on the prevalence of unmet dental care needs in disabled populations, informing national and EU-level efforts to ensure equitable access.

The findings will support the design of inclusive dental care systems that address mobility, communication, and financial challenges. It also promotes awareness among health professionals and policymakers about the oral health rights and needs of people with disabilities.

By focusing on a vulnerable and underrepresented population, the project contributes to public health equity and the broader implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in healthcare contexts.

Hypothesis (25 words):

People with disabilities have less frequent dental follow-up.

Implication for Practice (50 words):

This research supports the implementation of adapted dental services, including easy access to dental health care, mobile clinics, caregiver training, and professional education. It can guide inclusive health policies and improve the accessibility and responsiveness of oral healthcare systems for people with disabilities.

Implication for Research (50 words):

The project encourages further investigation into healthcare access disparities in disabled populations. It also promotes interdisciplinary collaboration between dentistry, disability studies, and public health to develop evidence-based solutions that enhance oral health equity throughout Europe.