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Factors influencing dental care access in Jordanian adults

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Abstract: Background: The aims of this study are to assess the influences of demographic and personal factors on Jordanian adults' abilities to use dental services and the barriers to regular attendance. Methods: A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 650 Jordanian adults attending King Abdullah University Hospital (KAUH) (n = 200), Jordan University of Science and Technology Dental Health Teaching Center (JUST-DHTC) (n = 150), Yarmouk University Health Clinics (YUHC) (n = 150), and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) clinics (n = 150). 614 questionnaires were completed. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data, generate descriptive statistics and perform multiple logistic regressions. The level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Results: Approximately 93% of participants were dental services users. 89% were irregular users, while only 11% were regular users. The main reasons given for not visiting dental offices regularly were lack of time (39.2%), cost of treatment (26.9%), treatment not needed (22.2%), and fear of dentists (15.1%). Only 6.7% of respondents stated that they had never visited a dentist, while more than half (56.1%) reported the lack of need for dental treatment as a major reason for not using dental services. Restorative therapy was the most frequently sought treatment (61.6%), while periodontal treatment was the least frequently sought (14.1%). Although respondents who were married and/ or those having missing teeth were significantly more likely to use dental services, respondents who were single were more likely to be regular attendees. Conclusion: The overwhelming majority of adults were irregular attendees. Time and cost constraints, lack of need for treatment, and fear of dentists were reported as major barriers to regular attendance. The study findings call for planning of educational and promotional programs to increase Jordanians' awareness of and regular use of