Commentary:
Oral health is a critical but overlooked component of overall health especially among the under-served population. Oral health problems like pain, functional & aesthetic impairments have a negative impact on the quality of life of people. Access to oral health care is an important determinant of the utilization of dental services which includes both preventive, promotive and curative dental health care. Dental Safety Net may address the issue of oral health inequalities among population, which is defined as “the facilities providers & payment programs that supplement dental care specifically for under-served populations”. The dental safety net refers to the structures which support the populations facing considerable barriers in accessing oral health care services which typically involves old age or medically compromised people, individuals without private insurance or those who are unable to pay for services out of pocket. The dental safety net comprises private practice dentists, government dentists, non-dental health providers, charitable programs, school-based oral health services, mobile dental units, academic dental institutions, government qualified health centers, government & state loan services, rural health care services, dieticians, emergency units, support services & local health departments. The services offered through dental safety net ranges from prevention, diagnostic (oral examinations & X-ray), basic restorative treatments & uncomplicated extractions and referral services for specialized and comprehensive oral health care. Inadequate dental manpower, under participation of private dentists, low priority and budget allocation to oral health services by the government are the major barriers to the dental safety net in India. Dental Safety Net inadequacies need multi factorial approaches requiring efforts of policy makers, public & private health sectors, education & research fields, along with social service organisations, should join hands with dental organization to build a strong Dental Safety Net. Hence, this poster review highlights the importance of establishing a strong Dental Safety Net and also distances the barriers for establishing the same in the present scenario.
References


Keywords: Dental Health Services; Safety Net; Accessible & Affordable; Reaching Under-served; Multifactorial approach.

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