Oral health, medical diagnoses, and functioning in children with disabilities – a study using the ICF-CY

Johanna Norderyd1,2, Denise Faulks, Gunilla Klingberg

1The Institute for Postgraduate Dental Education and 2CHILD, Swedish Institute for Disability Research, School of Health Sciences, Jönköping, Sweden,

AIM To describe children with disabilities receiving paediatric specialist dental care, from a biopsychosocial perspective, using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – Children and Youth version (ICF-CY) and with a focus on the relationship between oral health, medical diagnosis, and functioning.

METHODS The ICF-CY Checklist for Oral Health was completed using structured interview, direct observation, and dental records. Descriptive data analysis was performed together with Principle Component Analysis to calculate factors of functioning and cluster analysis in order to present functioning profiles.

RESULTS Ninety-nine children with at least one major medical diagnosis were included. The most common acquired dental diagnoses noted in the dental records were plaque and calculus (19%), significant tooth wear (12%), and gingivitis (11%). Only 7% had manifest caries at the time for the interview and 20 children had previous or current experience of caries. There were no statistically significant differences between medical diagnoses or clusters of functioning concerning caries experience or the oral health parameters studied.

CONCLUSION The children in this study had good oral health, despite complex disabilities. Neither medical diagnosis nor functioning was found to have a clear relationship with oral disease.