A Questionnaire Survey on Oral Health Care to Welfare Centers in Saitama Prefecture

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Abstract: With the increasing diverse needs of oral health care users in recent years, it is critical to provide high quality oral care. In order to integrate oral health care in welfare programs, more and more welfare centers are introducing dental health facilities. However, little information is available regarding the current situation of oral health care provided at welfare centers, and dental demands in the center. In the present study, a questionnaire survey was conducted in various types of welfare centers in order to understand the current situation of oral health care provided and dental demands in the centers.

A questionnaire survey was conducted in a total of 1,309 centers in Saitama prefecture, including nursing care and welfare centers, and schools for the visually impaired, hearing impaired, and other disabled students. The questionnaire included the following items: 1. the current condition of the respondent and the center where he/she was working, 2. the current condition of oral health care provided in the center, and 3. information which is required by the center in order to facilitate coordination between the oral health care facility and users.

The number of respondents was 331 (recovery rate 25.3%). The centers where respondents were employed included home nursing care centers, visiting nursing care centers, and welfare centers for the elderly. Only 206 of the 331 respondents (62.2%) answered that their center had a dental care provider with whom they could cooperate and coordinate. The main reason mentioned by the respondents for not having a dental care facility was “it is not obligatory.” However, more than 80% of the respondents admitted the necessity of collaborating or cooperating with dental care facilities.

Although the required oral health care information and cooperation items varied among different types of centers, the overall number of respondents who knew about “the relationship between oral care and aspiration pneumonia” and “the relationship between the whole body and oral diseases” was high. This suggested that the respondents were aware of the importance of oral health care for general wellbeing. Preferable coordination with dental care providers by welfare centers varied according to the type of center.

Based on the results of the present study, it was confirmed that oral health care has become highly important in nursing care and welfare centers.

Key words: Welfare centers, Oral health care, Questionnaire survey