

Self-Reported Oral Health Outcomes after Mask-Wearing among Inland Empire Adults

Abstract

Objectives: To evaluate whether extensive wearing of masks may have potential negative effects on a person's oral health such as dry mouth, halitosis, and overall decline in personal daily oral hygiene

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional survey was distributed to adults that reside in San Bernardino County, specifically: Victorville, Ontario, Fontana, Redlands, Loma Linda, and Colton. Twelve questions were used in order to analyze people's knowledge and attitude on their oral health while wearing masks. The Chi-square test was used to test our hypothesis. 147 out of the 207 people approached participated in this study.

Results: No statistically significant correlation between duration of mask wearing and oral hygiene. However, the following findings were observed: Rates of xerostomia in this cohort [53.7% (95%CI 45.3-62.0)] were significantly higher than what is reported in the literature. The overall estimated prevalence of dry mouth is 22.0% (95%CI 17.0-26.0%).

Conclusions: No changes in people's perception of their oral cavity due to mask wearing, except for their oral health habits.

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