Parental attitude and emotional well-being mediate orthodontic treatment demand in adolescents

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Abstract

Introduction: There is a high interindividual variability of orthodontic treatment demand among adolescents and it is seldom conditioned by the malocclusion severity. The aim was to explore mediating and moderating effects of adolescents' quality of life and parental attitude of their child's orthodontic treatment need on the relationship between malocclusion severity and adolescents' treatment demand.

Materials and methods: Cross-sectional explanatory study was performed on 197 adolescents (55% female) aged 11-14 years, orthodontic patients at the University Dental Clinic in Rijeka and Zagreb. Quality of life was measured using 16-item regression short-form Child Perceptions Questionnaire. Mediation and moderation models were examined by regression analysis.

Results: There is no moderating effect, but mediation has been proven. Parental attitude and impaired emotional well-being diminish the direct linear relationship between malocclusion severity and treatment demand by acting as parallel mediators (B=0.12-0.33; p<0.001). Oral symptoms, functional limitations and social well-being are not determinants of the treatment request. With the increase in psychological influences of malocclusion and the attitude of parents about the need for treatment, the demand increases.

Conclusion: Parental attitude and emotional well-being shape adolescents' demand for orthodontic treatment. Adolescents who feel ashamed because of their malocclusion and whose parents have a high attitude about the need for treatment will have a greater demand.