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Eating disorders, oral health, and health service management: Is there a connection?**Samanta Pereira de Souza**

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Eating disorders (EDs) are complex psychiatric disorders of multifactorial origin, characterized by altered eating behaviors and extreme concerns about body weight and shape. Among mental illnesses, they have the highest morbidity and mortality rates and, therefore, require multidisciplinary treatment.

Anorexia Nervosa (AN), Bulimia Nervosa (BN), and Binge Eating Disorder (BED) stand out as the main eating disorders.

Malnutrition and the presence of purging behaviors, such as self-induced vomiting, result in significant dental changes that can interfere with emotional state, in addition to making food intake more difficult—further compromising the nutritional status of these patients.

The presence of orofacial pain, dental diseases, and temporomandibular dysfunction can lead to chronic facial pain, which may interfere with emotional well-being and hinder food intake, further compromising the nutritional status of these patients.

Studies show that patients with EDs have worse oral health (dental and periodontal) compared to healthy individuals, with a higher prevalence of signs of erosion, perimolysis, and non-carious lesions, as well as more complaints of dry mouth, oral burning, gingival bleeding, poorer oral hygiene, and a greater prevalence of orofacial pain compared to healthy individuals. Salivary flow is usually reduced, and there are changes in the buffering capacity, amylase, sialic acid, and sodium content in saliva. Some studies show that the complaint of "dental absence" is more prevalent in patients with EDs and orofacial pain.

These findings highlight the importance of collaboration between dental and medical practitioners. It is essential the role of the dentist in the early recognition of symptoms, thereby promoting oral health and long-term quality of life for these patients, making the dentist an important professional in multidisciplinary eating disorder services for a better health for the patients and reducing the long term costs of treatment.

Biography

Samanta Pereira de Souza is a dentist specialized in hospital dentistry and oral care for individuals with special needs. Over the past 10 years, she has been involved in research focused on eating disorders. Additionally, she has extensive experience in health service management, having worked for five years as a Technical Advisor in Health for the city of São Paulo.