



## Lujain Sahab

Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

### Is the inability to afford dental care associated with untreated dental caries in adults?

**Objective:** to assess whether inability to afford dental care is associated with the number of teeth with untreated dental caries and whether this association is independent of socioeconomic factors and ethnicity. Basic research design Data was from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) (2015-2018), a cross-sectional national survey of non-institutionalized Americans.

**Participants:** The analysis included participants aged 18 years and over.

**Main outcome measures:** The association between number of teeth untreated caries and affordability of dental care was assessed adjusting for age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, dental visits, and health insurance.

**Results:** 9,440 participants were included in the analysis. Mean number of teeth with untreated caries was 0.51 and 13% reported inability to afford care. Mean numbers of teeth with untreated caries among those unable and able

to afford dental care were 1.46 and 0.36, respectively. In the fully adjusted model, the rate ratio for teeth with caries among those who could not afford dental care was 2.45 (95% Confidence Intervals 'CI': 2.04, 2.95).

Income and education inequalities were slightly attenuated after accounting for inability to afford care. Other statistically significant predictors included education, and irregular dental visits.

**Conclusion:** Inability to afford dental care may exacerbate inequalities in dental caries. The findings highlight the need for affordable access to dental services.

### Biography

Lujain Sahab is a general dentist working in the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia. She has gained a master's degree in Dental Public Health from King's College London and is currently a PhD candidate in the same specialty. She also has multiple publications to her name.

[Lujain.sahab@gmail.com](mailto:Lujain.sahab@gmail.com)

Received Date: July 20, 2022; Accepted Date: July 22, 2022; Published Date: October 04, 2022