

## BASCD 2022 ABSTRACT 10

**Impact of COVID-19 on Referrals for child  
Dental General Anaesthesia in England**

*Alshammari, D.,\* Goldthorpe, J., Peter, S., Pretty, I.A.  
University of Manchester, UK*

**Background:**

COVID-19 pandemic has raised multiple issues affecting the healthcare system. Lockdown was announced in England on 25th March 2020, and restrictions began easing after 4th July. Routine dental clinic activities were suspended during this period and limited to urgent dental issues.

**Objectives:**

To explore how COVID-19 restrictions impacted on referrals to general dental anaesthesia (DGAs). Moreover, to investigate if demographic factors (deprivation, age and location) influence access to DGAs.

**Methods:**

A retrospective study examined data from electronic referral records of child patients referred to DGAs in different areas in England in 2019 and 2020. We compared data from the first lockdown period (April-June 2020) with the corresponding period in 2019.

**Results:**

Significantly fewer cases were referred in 2020 (n=605) compared with 2019 (n=3376), with a greater proportion in both years coming from those from more deprived areas. Children referred during lockdown were younger (mean=6years) compared to their 2019 counterparts (mean=10years). Reasons for referral were similar in both years, most commonly pain, followed by cooperative issues and extraction.

**Conclusion:**

The pandemic substantially disrupted child dental practice, with fewer children referred for hospital dental treatment. Those who were referred were more likely to be younger and from more deprived populations, with older children particularly impacted by Covid restrictions. This suggests an unmet need for oral health care in these populations, further demanding primary and secondary care dental services. Interventions should target oral health prevention and relevant services at families most in need.

**Correspondence to:**

Dalil Alshammari

Email: [dalil.alshammari@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:dalil.alshammari@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk)

[https://doi.org/10.1922/CDH\\_BASCD22\\_Abtract10](https://doi.org/10.1922/CDH_BASCD22_Abtract10)