**Treatment need**

**& demand**

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In developing countries, oral disease data are primarily collected to aid authorities planning health care systems. These epidemiological data may allow for an improved understanding of the nature of oral diseases and changing disease patterns at the population level because these studies are conducted in populations that so far have had very limited access to formal oral health care.

**Need** : Is an important concept in public health. It is used in the planning and management of health services including health improvement, resource allocation, and equity. However, need is a multi-faceted concept with no one universal definition.

**Demand**: Is the expression by a patient or the public of a desire to receive health care related to their perceived needs.

**Utilization:** Is the actual attendance by members of the public at dental treatment facilities to receive dental care. It is expressed as the proportion of a population who attend a dentist within a given time, usually a year or the average number of visits per person made during a year.

**Met need:** Is measured by utilization data.

**Identified but unmet need :** Are the needs identified by the profession which are not met.

There are various definitions of need, and there are **four categories of need:**

1. **Normative need**, defined by the professional.
2. **Felt need**, which is equated with want.
3. **Expressed need or demand**; felt need is converted into action by seeking care.
4. **Comparative need**, which is assessed by comparing care received by different people with similar characteristics.

**Four types of social need**

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| **Type of need** | **Definition** | **Examples** |
| **Normative need** | Need that is defined by experts. Normative needs are not absolute and there may be different standards laid down by different experts. | * Vaccinations, * A decision by a surgeon that a patient needs an operation |
| **Felt need** | Need perceived by an individual. Felt needs are limited by individual perceptions and knowledge of services. | Having a headache,  Feeling knee pain |
| **Expressed need**  **(Demanded need)** | Felt needs turned into action. Help seeking. | Going to the dentist for a toothache |
| **Comparative need** | Needs identified by comparing the services received by one group of individuals with those received by another comparable group. | A rural village may identify a need for a well or a school if the neighboring village has one |

The concept of need is central to the planning, provision and evaluation of health services. For effective planning and evaluation of any health service, both estimates of levels of need as well as demand for treatment should be taken into account.

**The method of assessment of treatment need has been through**

1. Clinical examination
2. Measuring patients demand for treatment and perceived need for treatment
3. Survey system to determine oral health of the population

**Factors affecting Demands**

**1- Age:** dental utilization rates are lowest for children under 5 years and persons over 65 years.

**2- Gender:** females use dental services more than males, but in some age and education groups the rates were similar.

**3- Education:** the utilization rate increases with increasing the level of education. The education level of the head of the household is an important predicator of how frequently the family members will utilize dental services.

**4- Socioeconomic status:** higher social classes utilize dental services more frequently than lower social classes. However higher classes are often related to high incomes and good educational background, because these three factors are often positively associated with each other.

**5- Occupation:** persons in professional occupations visit their dentist more frequently than non- skilled manual workers.

**6- Residence:** persons in urban visit the dentist more than those in rural areas. Utilization also varied with the size of the community, the larger the community, the greater the utilization rate for dental services.