Current Status of Periodontal Treatment in Malaysia

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Malaysia with a population of 18 million has about 1500 dentist (1993). 54% are private practitioners and the remainder are in the government health service. The dentist to population ratio 1 : 12000. About 60% of the population received dental treatment. There are 12 specialist periodontist.

The prevalence of chronic periodontal disease in adults is 72.4% and 29.0% had deep periodontal pockets (1974). The CPITN survey in school children (1988) found that 5.4% needed OHI and 2.0% needed scaling.

Three levels of periodontal treatment are provided. For school children, the treatment is done by the dental staff nurses (New Zealand style). This is a comprehensive dental treatment comprising dental health education, dental prophylaxis, simple amalgam restoration and extraction of the deciduous teeth. This service is rendered to the school children throughout the country except for the remotest areas.

Initial periodontal treatment for adults is carried out by the general dentist. In towns, this service is rendered by the private GDP though some patients seek treatment at government dental clinics. In the rural areas, this service is mainly being provided at the government dental clinics, mobile dental clinics or at dental clinics within health centres. A resident dentist stationed at a rural government dental clinic will visit the health centres in the outlying areas either utilizing the existing dental facilities at this centre or setting up a mobile dental clinic to render treatment.

The periodontists are stationed in major towns at government hospitals or at major dental clinics. At these centres, both the preventive and curative aspects of periodontics are being carried out by the periodontists themselves since the service of the dental hygienist is non-existant. The majority of the work involves initial periodontal treatment followed by periodontal flap procedures. Mucogingival surgery, gingival grafts, artificial bone grafts and GTR procedures are carried out only in selected cases.