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## Psychosocial Factors of COVID-19 Impact Oral Health

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## Psychosocial Factors of COVID-19 Impact Oral Health

### Cover Page Footnote

MAPD introduction to the pediatric dental series

# Psychosocial Factors of COVID-19 Impact Oral Health

By Neeru Ramaswami, BDS, MS, MPH

February is National Children's Dental Health Month! Each year, the Michigan Dental Association partners with the Michigan Academy of Pediatric Dentistry to provide colleagues with articles of interest from the world of pediatric dentistry.

The Michigan Academy of Pediatric Dentistry represents more than 180 pediatric dentists actively providing dental care for thousands of children every year in Michigan. The MAPD is a strong advocate for access to oral health care for children, and we are grateful for the Healthy Kids Dental program's expansion to each of the 83 counties in Michigan. Over the years, the MAPD has partnered and educated our general dental colleagues and medical colleagues to bring children's oral health to the forefront in the state of Michigan.

As we continue to practice in the COVID-19 pandemic, we are acutely aware of the effect of psychosocial factors and their impact on the oral health-related quality of life across all ages. The impact of these psychosocial factors is so profound that there is an urgent need for a more interdisciplinary approach to care for our patients by educating and partnering with our general dental colleagues, medical colleagues, and dental/medical auxiliaries.

In the accompanying article in this issue of the *MDA Journal*, we focus on adolescent oral health and eating

The MAPD is dedicated to providing care for children and adolescents and educating our dental and medical peers and other auxiliaries. In the accompanying article in this issue of the *MDA Journal*, we focus on adolescent oral health and eating disorders. The article was written by experts in adolescent health and pediatric dentistry from the University of Michigan. The MAPD has provided this article to benefit our patients and the greater oral health care community in Michigan.

disorders. The article was written by experts in adolescent health and pediatric dentistry from the University of Michigan. The MAPD has provided this article to benefit our patients and the greater oral health care community.

In Michigan, eating disorders among adolescents (ages 11-21 years) have shown a dramatic spike in cases. Pandemic data shows a dramatic twofold increase in hospitalization and mortality in this age group compared to the pre-pandemic data. Transgender and diverse youth, who make up 2% of this adolescent population, are at an increased risk of eating disorders or substance disorders. While the impact of the pandemic has many unseen effects on our children and adolescents, this is probably the tip of the iceberg of things we will start to see in our clinical practice.

Identifying adolescents with eating disorders can often be challenging because of the nature of the conversation at a dental appointment. General dentists are in an ideal situation to interact with this population of patients and impact their lives. The MAPD is dedicated to providing care for children and adolescents and educating our dental and medical peers and other auxiliaries.

We hope you can take away some clinical pearls for your dental practice and continue to positively impact the lives of children through your work. ●

## About the Author

**Dr. Neeru Ramaswami** is a Diplomate and Fellow of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry. She is the current president of the Michigan Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. She received a master's degree in public health from the University of Northern Colorado and a master's degree in pediatric dentistry from the University of Michigan. She is an adjunct clinical faculty member at the University of Michigan pediatric residency program and is on staff at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing. She practices in Okemos.



Ramaswami