

INCREASING GENDER GAP FOR PREVALENCE AND CHRONIFICATION OF OROFACIAL PAIN IN THE POPULATION

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Aim: Although a fluctuating pattern of orofacial pain across the life span has been proposed, data on its natural course is lacking. The longitudinal course of orofacial pain in the general population was evaluated using data from routine dental check-ups at all Public Dental Health services in Västerbotten, Sweden.

Material and methods: In a large population sample, two screening questions were used to identify individuals with pain once a week or more in the orofacial area. Incidence and longitudinal course of orofacial pain were evaluated using annual data for 2010-2017. To evaluate predictors for orofacial pain remaining over time, individuals who reported pain on at least two consecutive dental check-ups were considered chronic. A generalized estimating equation model was used to analyze the prevalence, accounting for repeated observations on the same individuals.

Results: In total, 180,308 individuals (equal gender distribution) were examined in 525,707 dental check-ups. More women than men reported orofacial pain related to TMD (OR 2.58, 95% CI 2.48-2.68), and there was a significant increase in the prevalence of reported pain from 2010 to 2017 in both women and men (OR 1.11, 95

CI 1.05-1.18). Longitudinal data for 101,813 individuals were available for incidence analysis. Women were at higher risk of both developing orofacial pain (IRR 2.47, 95% CI 2.33-2.61) and reporting pain in consecutive check-ups (IRR 2.56, 95% CI 2.29-2.87).

Conclusion: The prevalence of orofacial pain in the general population is increasing over time and more so in women, thus indicating an increasing gender gap for chronic orofacial pain.