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Intergenerational Caries Disease Perceptions Among Adults in Sweden

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Objectives The concept of 'attitude to illness' relates to an individual's perspective on the illness and reflects a range that encompasses appraisal and response - the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of an individual in response to the illness. The research question for this survey was about the value and social perception of dental caries. To answer this question, an online survey was planned with a quantitative approach.

Methods The survey contained 12 questions formulated in Swedish on the individuals' perception of caries in relation to seven other well-known medical conditions, and it was carried at a random sample of Swedish adults aged 27–58, two "generations" (X and Y) were selected. The survey was distributed via the two different social platforms Facebook and Instagram. The Likert scale questionnaire items were transformed in dichotomous variable and frequencies were calculated for each item. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to determine the component that bears the greatest proportion of information to generate the definition to caries as disease.

Results The link was opened by 25503 individuals of which 6404 completed the questionnaire and 6388 questionnaires were considered (4153 generation X/2235 generation Y). Dental caries was defined as a disease in almost 60.0% of the responders in the X generations respect to 51.4% in the Y generation ($\chi^2_{(1)}=33.7$, $p<0.01$). The gradings from disagree (1) to agree (6) for dental caries shown lower degree in comparison to other diseases.

Conclusions There was a difference in the view of dental caries as a disease in comparison to several other medical conditions. Furthermore, it was considered a disease to a higher degree in the older age cohort (generation X) in comparison to the younger age group (generation Y).