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Oral Health of Patients With Epidermolysis Bullosa – a Retrospective Study

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Objectives This retrospective study assessed oral health in patients with Epidermolysis bullosa (EB) compared to a healthy control group, aiming to develop tailored dental protocols.

Background: EB is a rare genetic skin disorder leading to blistering and scarring and is notably affecting oral health, due to limitations in mouth opening, ankyloglossia, pain during tooth brushing, and frequently fused fingers. EB is classified into four main types (EB simplex (EBS), EB junctionalis (EBJ), EB dystrophica (EBD), and Kindler EB (KEB)). This study addresses the lack of comprehensive dental treatment concepts for EB.

Methods Medical records and x-rays from patients with EB (n=37), including EBS (n=3), EBJ (n=5) and EBD (n=28) and EB unknown (n=1), treated at the Center for Dental Medicine at the University Medical Center Freiburg in 2014 to 2024 were analyzed and compared to a healthy control group with similar age- and gender distribution. The oral health status including DMFT/dmft analyses and following therapy, such as tooth extractions and fillings were determined. Statistical analysis was performed using Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test; $\alpha=0.05$; STATA 17.0.

Results The study included 34 male and 40 female patients in total with a mean age of 11.53 years. Compared to the healthy control group, patients with EB exhibited significantly higher DMFT/dmft ($p<0.0001$) and more carious teeth ($p<0.0001$), resulting in more tooth extractions ($p<0.0001$), especially in severe EBD cases.

Conclusions The findings of this study highlight the necessity of specific dental interventions emphasizing preventive care to enhance EB patients' quality of life.