

ABSTRACT

Parental Experiences in the Management of Children with Cleft Lip and/or Palate in Tawau Hospital

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Introduction: Cleft lip and palate (CLP) has a profound psycho-social impact on patients and parents. It is important to assess parental experiences and satisfaction as they play important role in the care of the affected child, especially during the surgical intervention phase. This study assessed the parental experiences towards caring for CLP children, and their level of satisfaction with the treatment received and investigated the relationship between socioeconomic factors and parental satisfaction towards cleft management. **Methods:** The study involved 44 respondents out of 70 parents of CLP children treated in the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Department, Tawau Hospital. A pro forma was designed to assist data collection and Cleft Evaluation Profile (CEP) was used for the assessment. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. **Results:** Overall, 100% of respondents were "very satisfied" and "satisfied" with the treatment received. Parents were most satisfied with the face profile (95%). The appearance of teeth and nose were the most dissatisfied features reported at 43% and 16% respectively. The socioeconomic background did not affect the level of parental satisfaction whilst the amount of knowledge about cleft treatment was seen to affect the level of satisfaction among parents significantly ($p < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** Our findings showed that parents had generally positive experiences in the management of CLP children. The majority of parents were satisfied with the overall

care and surgical outcome. The difference in CEP ratings showed parents with different amounts of knowledge related to cleft have different satisfaction levels with the surgical

outcome. This is valuable in continuing the service and reaching out more to the oro-cleft community.