

## The State of Oral Health after COVID-19 Lockdown: A Systematic Review

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**Abstract :** Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on global health and healthcare systems, including oral health. The lockdown measures implemented in many countries have led to changes in oral health behaviors, access to dental care, and the delivery of dental services. However, the extent of these changes and their effects on oral health outcomes remains unclear. This systematic review aims to synthesize the available evidence on the state of oral health after the COVID-19 lockdown. Methods: We conducted a systematic search of electronic databases (PubMed, Embase, Scopus, and Web of Science) and grey literature sources for studies reporting on oral health outcomes after the COVID-19 lockdown. We included studies published in English between January 2020 and March 2023. Two reviewers independently screened the titles, abstracts, and full texts of potentially relevant articles and extracted data from included studies. We used a narrative synthesis approach to summarize the findings. Results: Our search identified 23 studies from 12 countries, including cross-sectional surveys, cohort studies, and case reports. The studies reported on changes in oral health behaviors, access to dental care, and the prevalence and severity of dental conditions after the COVID-19 lockdown. Overall, the evidence suggests that the lockdown measures had a negative impact on oral health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations. There were decreases in dental attendance, increases in dental anxiety and fear, and changes in oral hygiene practices. Furthermore, there were increases in the incidence and severity of dental conditions, such as dental caries and periodontal disease, and delays in the diagnosis and treatment of oral cancers. Conclusion: The COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdown measures have had significant effects on oral health outcomes, with negative impacts on oral health behaviors, access to care, and the prevalence and severity of dental conditions. These findings highlight the need for continued monitoring and interventions to address the long-term effects of the pandemic on oral health.

**Keywords :** COVID-19, oral health, systematic review, dental public health

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