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## PERSON-CENTERED CARE: PERSPECTIVES OF FREE DENTAL CLINIC USERS IN MONTRÉAL, CANADA

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**T**here has been a relatively slow incorporation of person-centered care into dental care. Despite the efforts to sustain this approach in dental health care delivery, the perspectives of patients have yet to be considered, especially those using free dental clinics. Our objectives were: (1) to describe the perspectives of adults unable to access private dental clinics when using free dental clinics, (2) to document their suggestions for improvements to dental care.

This qualitative descriptive study included 13 adults using a free dental clinic. To select participants, we adopted a maximum variation sampling strategy regarding age, sex, marital status, education level and employment status. We used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to collect data and thematic content analysis to analyze the verbatim transcripts.

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Participants were generally satisfied with the dental care they received in private and free dental clinics. However, they did not appreciate the long wait times at free clinics, and were bothered by the cost at private clinics.

They emphasized a desire for quality time with the dentist allowing for more informed and shared decisions about their care, regardless of the clinic they visited. Participants want to feel cared for through a trustworthy relationship with the clinician, and suggested incorporating a walk-in concept into free clinics to address access to care.

Adults using free dental clinics have various experiences with private and public dentistry, but they all need clinicians who adopt a comprehensive approach when providing information. This could improve patients' experiences through a more person-centered approach to dental care. ■