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Extraction of "killer" teeth: the case of two Somali siblings.

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Abstract

Many cultures present several intriguing ethnic dental practices. Therefore, in a multiethnic society, health care professionals have to be attuned to the patients' cultural values and traditions because they impact their attitude in seeking care and the implementation of the professionals' recommendations. Before seeking medical or dental care in the formal health system, families may rely first on an elder or healer for advice and interventions. In East Africa, the unerupted primary canines may be extracted in the first days or months of life because it is believed that they cause persistent fever, vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, dehydration, infectious diseases and death. The practice is done using nonsterilized instruments leading to harmful localized and systemic sequelae, including fatalities. The purpose of this manuscript was to discuss the case of two Somali siblings who had tooth buds enucleated at a young age, leading to significant dental problems.

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