



## Evaluation of Dental Caries Awareness among the Parents of School Going Children

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### ABSTRACT

**AIM:** *The purpose of this study is to evaluate the awareness of parents about the dental caries among the school going children in chennai.*

**OBJECTIVES:** *The objective of this study is to investigate the dental caries awareness in the different medium school children by questionnaire method.*

**BACKGROUND:** *The dental caries is one of the most common infectious diseases all over the world. Overall dental caries is more severe in the baby teeth of 4-11 years children than the permanent tooth. However, an active effort of the school authority and dental health care team can make a awareness program more effective and also make a parents more aware*

*about the dental caries prevention and milk tooth preservation.*

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** *Total 80 parents from different socioeconomic groups participated in the study. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire addressing various aspects of knowledge and attitude of parents toward oral health and treatment modalities*

*Awareness among parents was significantly lower in low socioeconomic group. Their attitude toward dental treatment differed significantly in high socioeconomic group preferred going to the pediatric dentist.*

**CONCLUSION:** *The level of awareness among parents is relatively low and there is need for the implementation of oral health awareness programs for parents to change their attitude toward dental treatment of their children*

**KEY WORDS:** *dental caries, oral health program, school children's.*

### INTRODUCTION

Dental caries is a ecological disease in which the diet, the host and microbial flora interact over a period of time so as to encourage the demineralisation of tooth enamel with resultant caries formation <sup>(1)</sup>. Untreated oral disease frequently leads to serious general health problem. Due to mechanical life, people are neglecting the oral health. It is necessary to create awareness

about dental caries and oral hygiene <sup>(2)</sup>. As oral diseases are largely preventable, it is hoped that with early exposure to oral health care activities, the prevalence of dental diseases will be reduced in children and they would be more receptive to dental service <sup>(3)</sup>. The aim of this study is to evaluate the awareness of dental caries among the parents of school going children.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 80 parents participated in the study who visited to the department of pediatric and preventive dentistry in Saveetha dental college and hospital. They were made to fill a multiple choice questionnaire, specifically related to their awareness regarding deciduous dentition.

The first part of questionnaire included demographic information regarding parents gender, child age and socioeconomic status. The

second part of question is to describe parents beliefs, attitudes, behaviour towards their children's oral health, indicating different risk for dental diseases among children. The modalities divided into 2 groups according to their socioeconomic status.

Group 1: parents having their annual income below 20,000

Group 2: parents having their annual income above 20,000

## RESULTS

**Table 1:** Attitudes towards professional dental care among the study population

	Frequency	Percentage(%)	Frequency	Percentage(%)
	Group I		Group II	
<b>How often do you visit the dentist</b>				
A)Regularly	8	10%	16	20%
B)when in pain	17	21.25%	21	26.25%
C)occasionally	7	8.75%	11	13.75%
<b>Are regular visits to dentist necessary</b>				
A)yes	19	23.75%	32	40%
B)no	6	7.5%	12	15%
C)don't known	7	8.75%	4	5%
<b>Driving factor for your last visit</b>				
A)tooth ache	25	31.25	30	37.5%
B)parents advice	4	5%	7	8.75%
C)dentist advice	2	2.5%	8	10%
D) other reasons	1	1.25%	3	3.75%
<b>Reasons behind not visiting the dentist</b>				
A)fear	22	27.5%	34	42.5%
B)of drilling	1	1.25%	3	3.75%
C)of needle	3	3.75%	7	8.75%
D)hight cost	6	7.5%	1	1.25%
<b>Dentist explain the procedures before treatment</b>				
A)yes	29	36.25%	47	58.75%
B)no	1	1.25%	--	--
C)don't known	2	2.5%	1	1.25%
<b>Dentist cares properly about the patient</b>				
A)yes	31	38.75%	45	56.25%
B)no	1	1.25%	1	1.25%
C)don't known	--	--	2	2.5%
<b>Does caries affects the dental aesthetics</b>				
A)yes	26	32.5%	39	48.75%
B)no	5	6.25%	3	3.75%
C)don't known	1	1.25%	6	7.5%
<b>Do sweets affects dental health</b>				
A)yes	24	30%	42	58.75%

B)no	3	3.75%	2	2.5%
C)don't known	5	6.25%	4	5%
<b>Do soft drinks affects dental health</b>				
A)yes	21	26.25%	33	41.25%
B)no	8	10%	9	11.25%
C)don't known	3	3.75%	6	7.5%
<b>Does the health of mouth and dentition impact the health of body</b>				
A)yes	23	28.75%	39	48.75%
B)no	6	7.5%	4	5%
C)don't known	3	3.75%	5	6.25%

Table 2: Oral health habits among the study population

	Frequency	Percentage(%)	Frequency	Percentage(%)
	Group I		Group II	
<b>Oral hygiene methods used</b>				
A)tooth brush and paste	31	38.75%	45	56.25%
B)dental floss	--	--	--	--
C)mouth wash	1	1.25%	3	3.75%
D)tooth picks	--	--	--	--
<b>Methods of brushing used</b>				
A)circular	26	32.5%	38	47.5%
B)horizontal	4	5%	3	3.75%
C)vertical	2	2.5%	7	8.75%
<b>Frequency of brushing</b>				
A)less than once	--	--	--	--
B)once	17	21.25%	19	23.75%
C)twice	15	18.75%	29	36.25%
<b>Frequency of changing tooth brush.</b>				
A)monthly	--	--	2	2.5%
B)3monthly	4	5%	16	20%
C)6monthly	28	35%	30	37.5%
<b>Role of parents in supervision of oral hygiene</b>				
A)parents watch and advice	11	13.75%	23	28.75%
B)parents advice only but don't watch	19	23.75%	25	31.25%
C)parents never cared	2	2.5%	--	--

The results revealed that the awareness among parents from group I was low compared to parents from group II (table-1). Significant difference was noted about the knowledge regarding oral health habits among the population (table-2)

Total of 80 parents are participated in this study. Most of them (70%) reported the toothache was the driving factored or their last visit. 40% of subjects only examination and routine heck up on their last visit.

The most common cause of not visiting e dentist was fear (69%) , for needle(13%), for drilling (5%) and high cost (9%). Approximately 80% were aware that carious teeth and dental caries affect dental aesthetics.

Awareness of importance of tooth brushing for caries prevention was high(90%) among the study population.

**DISCUSSION**

Rationale of oral health awareness program is to improve and motivate the parents regarding their dental health and treatment needs. This study highlight that to initiate dental awareness program among people at low socioeconomic groups.<sup>(4)</sup>

Children from low income and disadvantaged families have a disproportionately higher prevalence of untreated dental caries and lower dental care utilisation than higher income group children. A reduction of oral health disparities requires comprehensive oral health promotion strategy for better oral health among low income group children. This strategy include oral health program preventive and comprehensive dental care, social and organisational intervention to multiple barrier to access and utilise dental care<sup>(5)</sup>

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends cleaning children's teeth as soon as they erupt and use of dental floss when adjacent tooth are touching<sup>(6)</sup>. Many parents in this study from low socioeconomic group did not have the Reception of cleaning their children's teeth using oral hygiene aids, theirs is a need for awareness program's especially in low socioeconomic groups.

It is generally assumes that well educated person is more aware of overall health, but lack of awareness regarding importance of deciduous tooth was evident<sup>(7)</sup>. Attainment of good oral health us based on awareness of good dietary habits and oral hygiene practice. Need for making aware of brushing methods and importance of preventive measures for children via school dental program have been reported in literature<sup>(8)</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

Level of oral health awareness and initiation for dental visits in patients is low. Significant role of pedodontists in organising dental health awareness program for parents and needs to create more awareness about knowledge and importance of first dental visit among society. This study also

emphasises the need to initiate positive attitude toward treatment modalities for primary teeth.

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