



Assessment of Oral Health Awareness among the Individuals in Chengalpttu District: A Questionnaire Based Study

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Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of the patients visiting the OPD Department of periodontology and implantology KARPAGA VINAYAGA INSTITUTE OF DENTAL SCIENCES

Materials and Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted on the patient visiting OPD of KARPAGA VINAYAGA INSTITUTE OF DENTAL SCIENCES, CHENGALPATTU 300 participants participated in this pilot study. This study included a self-administered questionnaire, which took an average of about 10 minutes to complete all the question. Responses from the subjects were calculated in terms of frequency and percentages.

Results: Out of 300 participants 57.7% of them visit dentist only when they have dental problem. 78% of the population is afraid to visit dentist due to fear of pain 87.3% of participants were of the opinion that tooth loss is a natural sequel of the aging process.

Conclusion: There is a lack of awareness and a negligent attitude towards oral health among the general public. People must be motivated, and their attitudes towards the importance of oral health must be clarified through various programs. Comprehensive educational programs to promote excellent oral health and teach proper oral hygiene practices are desperately needed.

Keywords: Oral attitudes, oral health behaviour, knowledge, and awareness

INTRODUCTION:

Oral health is defined as the standard of health of oral and related tissues, which helps an individual to eat, speak and socialize without disease, discomfort and contribute to general health. ¹ Maintaining the oral health requires effort from both dentist as well as patient himself. It has been established that oral health is as significant as general health. Additionally, it has been noted that a significant component affecting general health is one level of education regarding dental health. ² It has an impact on a person physical, physiological, social well-being. Chronic conditions like diabetes, obesity, and dental caries are becoming more prevalent in emerging nations and have a negative impact on both oral health and overall health. ^{3,4} Similar to many other diet and health related disorders, treating dental disease is expensive. ^{5,6} Most people have tendency to neglect dental issues that are about to become more serious and have an impact on their general health. Millions of people suffer from ungovernable toothaches and poor quality of life as a result of people failure to recognize this fact.

Though there is still lack of education about the oral health, especially for rural people who make up more than 70% of Indian population, despite the fact that numerous studies have been conducted periodically to examine people's knowledge and behavior in this area. ⁷ Furthermore, despite having easy access to dental treatment, people who live in cities might still

develop oral illness as a result of poor eating habits and unhealthy lifestyles.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Study Population and Ethical Clearance:

A cross sectional study was conducted on the patient visiting OPD of KARPAGA VINAYAGA INSTITUTE OF DENTAL SCIENCES, CHENGALPET DISTRICT. The study was started after obtaining approval from the Ethical committee.

In order to access the suitability of the questionnaire, 300 participants participated in the pilot study. This study included self-administered questionnaire which took an average of about 10 min to complete all the question.

Study Sample

A straight forward random sampling methods was used to choose the 300 participants that made up the study sample. The study comprised adults who were at least 18 years old. Participants were informed of and given explanation of the study's goal, after obtaining informed consent the participants were asked to complete the questionnaires using the response options listed there.

Questionnaires:

Each of them received a self-made, closed-ended questionnaire that was prepared in vernacular language. The subjects chosen

have to be older than 18 in order for them to comprehend the questionnaire in its entirety. Two sections made up the questionnaire form. Age, sex, gender, occupation, and other demographic information about those taking part in the study were gathered in the first section of the questionnaire. The knowledge about dental health and the source of dental knowledge, the amount of time spent brushing, etc.

Questionnaire used for collecting information from the study subjects.

1. How frequently do you visit the dentist?
 - A. 6 months once
 - B. Once a year
 - C. If only there is a dental problem
2. Which type of dental aids do you use other than tooth brush?
 - A. Dental floss
 - B. Mouth wash
3. Which of the following methods do you use while brushing?
 - A. Vertical
 - B. Horizontal
 - C. Circular
4. How many minutes you take to brush your teeth?
 - A. 1min
 - B. 2min
 - C. 5min
5. How frequently change your tooth brush?
 - A. 3months once
 - B. 6 months once
 - C. Yearly once
6. How many times do you brush a day?
 - A. Once
 - B. Twice
7. Is it your first visit to dentist?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
8. What is your source of dental health?
 - A. Friends
 - B. Parents
 - C. Tv / radio
 - D. Dentist
9. Do you think dental health is important?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
10. Do you think oral health affects general health?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
11. Do you rinse your mouth after food?
 - A. Yes

B. No

12. Are you aware what dental plaque is?

A. yes

If yes, do you know dental plaque is the main cause for tooth loss.

a. Yes

b. No

B. No

13. Are you aware that sugar/ sticky food can causes tooth decay?

A. Yes

B. No

14. Are you aware that bleeding gums is a sign of poor gum health?

A. Yes

B. No

15. Are you afraid to visit a dentist?

A. Yes

B. No

DATA COLLECTION

To ensure that the concerned respondent understood the questions and the likely answers in their entirety, an investigator was always present with the respondent while the questionnaires were being filled out.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data was transferred to Microsoft excel. For data analysis, each response was given a score of 1,2,3,4 respectively. Result was statistically analyzed using SPSS software version 24 in terms of frequency and percentage.

RESULT

The study was conducted among 300 subjects. All the subjects were above the age of 18. The majority of the participants came from rural areas and they are daily labors. The findings revealed that people's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors were significantly influenced by their educational level, which was one of the key determinants. Most of the subjects in this study were illiterate which was the main reason for the lack of awareness about dental health.

A significant number of patients 14.7% said they had not consulted a dentist in the previous 12 months. The majority 57.7% of the patients in the current study visited a dentist only if any oral health problem was present, whereas 27.7% of them visited the dentist every 6 months for oral prophylaxis. [Figure1]

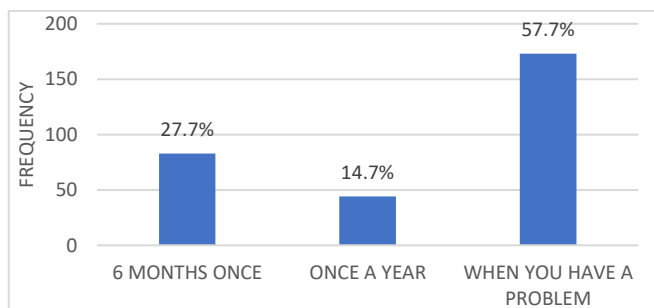


Figure 1 FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO DENTIST

The majority of people 67% began using mouthwash even without a dentist's recommendation. This indicates the growing awareness of mouthwash without proper instruction and indication of the mouthwash. 33% of the people used the floss as an interdental cleaning aid shown in [Figure 2]. This shows the increase in use of chemical plaque control than mechanical plaque control. Evidently, fewer people were aware of the benefits of using dental floss to prevent dental disease and improve oral hygiene.

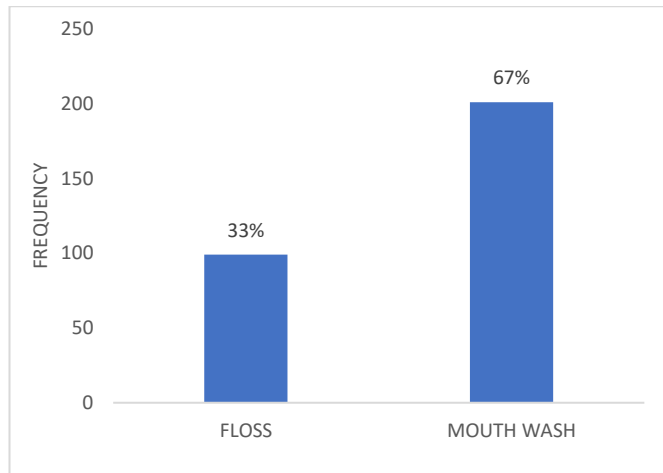


Figure 2 VARIOUS CLEANSING AIDS USED BY THE PATIENTS

0.7% of the study population spent 5 minutes to brush their teeth, while the majority of study participants 61.3% brush their teeth for less than 1min [Figure 3]. 38% of the population brush for 2 min, which is the ideal time for tooth brushing.

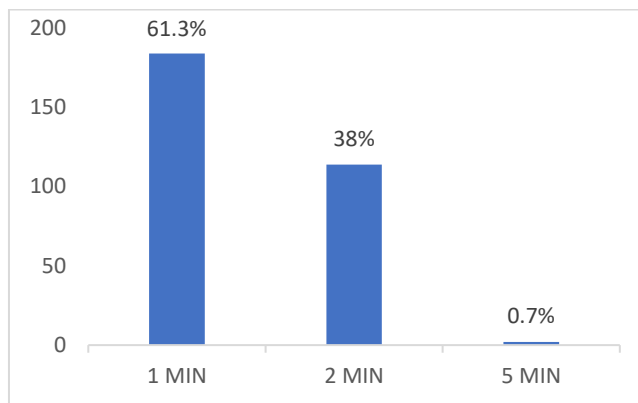


Figure 3 TIME DEVOTED TOWARD TOOTH BRUSHING

Majority 63.3% of the population had never been to dentist and 38.7% of those who had gone to dentist avoided the visit due to fear of pain [Figure4]. Most of the population, 61.3% brushed their teeth in horizontal direction did not use a mirror while brushing, about 19.7% of the people brushed in vertical direction while, others 19.0% used circular direction to brush their teeth [figure5].

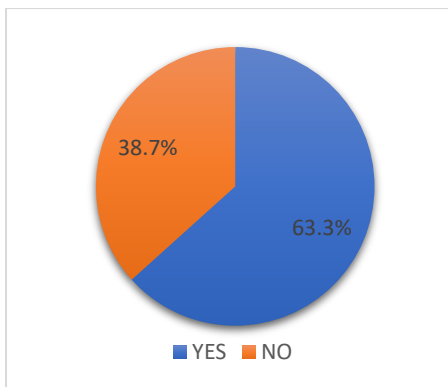


Figure 4 STUDY SUBJECTS FIRST VISIT TO DENTIST

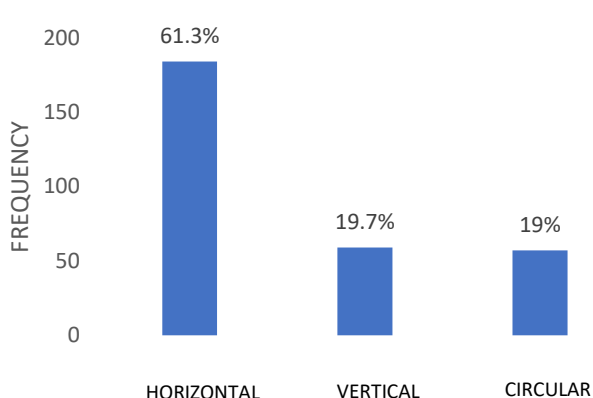


Figure 5 BRUSHING TECHNIQUES USED BY THE STUDY SUBJECTS

In the study population the majority of the patients (55%) reported rinsing their mouths with plain water after meals, whereas 45% patient don't rinse their mouth [figure 6] shows lack of knowledge about oral health. Majority 78% of the

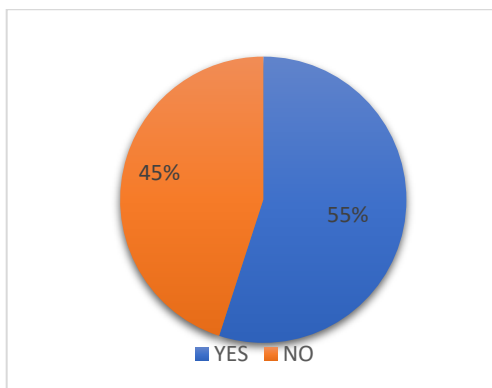


Figure 7 HABIT OF THE STUDY PATIENTS TO RINSE AFTER EVERY MEAL

patient were afraid to visit the dentist due to the fear of pain and anxiety about extraction. 22% of the study groups said they were not afraid as they have little knowledge about the dental procedure [figure7].

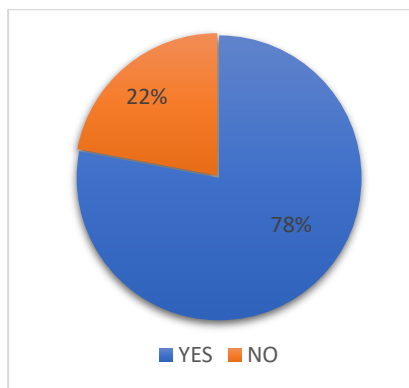


Figure 6 DESCRIBES THE STUDY SUBJECTS FEAR TO VISIT A DENTIST

To add on 87.3% of the subjects believed that bleeding gums is not related to poor gum health and believed that it is a natural sequel of aging, [figure8]. Figure 9 depicts the knowledge of study subjects and their source of dental knowledge. 60% of

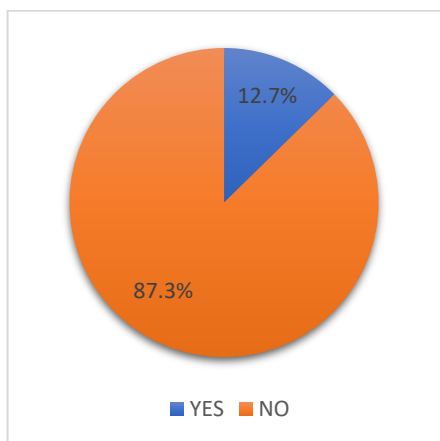


FIGURE 9 AWARENE ABOUT BLEEDING GUMS AMONG THE STUDY SUBJECTS

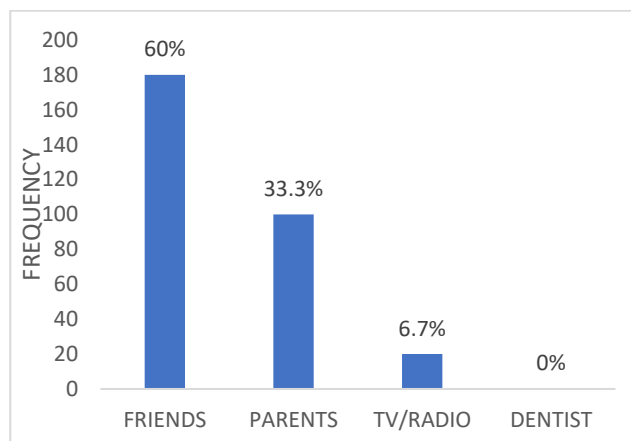


FIGURE 8 SOURCE OF DENTAL HEALTH AMONG THE STUDY SUBJECTS

DISCUSSION

A person's oral health is an important component of overall health and a valuable asset. The state of oral health has consistently been neglected. People have underestimated the effects of poor oral health, which has resulted in bigger issues that will be more challenging to manage in the future. The degree to which we are unaware of our oro-dental health mostly depends on our level of knowledge.^{8,9}

This study helps us to know about the educational level of the study subjects, which is indirectly related to the knowledge of the study subjects and his /her practice toward his health. About 66% of the study population believed that oral health is not related to general health. The most widespread noncommunicable diseases like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease shows many risk factors associated with oral diseases. Similar studies have also been conducted in other countries to evaluate the knowledge, attitude, and behavior of various groups, professionals, students, and citizens. 14% of participants in our study group visits dentist every year, 27.7 % of their visit occurred in the previous six months, 57.7% of the participants reported they never visited a dentist, which may be attributed to dental anxiety and lack of knowledge about regular checkups. Similar results were obtained in other studies, the ideal tooth brushing time is 2min. In the current study only 38 % of the participants reported brushing for 2 min. While 61.3% of them reported they brush for 1 min only. This indicates the need in the awareness about oral hygiene and dental health practices.^{9,10}

One of the main reasons why people avoid going to the dentist is fear of pain. Despite major advancements in the field of dentistry, phobia of pain during treatment still exists among a sizable population, posing a barrier to receiving dental care. In our study around 63.3% of the participants never visited the dentist and believed that pain is a part of the dental procedure and avoided it. A study carried out by other brought out similar results. Further response of study subjects to the question regarding the use of other dental aids such as mouthwash, 67% had higher positive response. Only 33% of the study population used dental floss, the knowledge about floss was only known to people who has under gone orthodontic treatment. The use of

subjects gain their knowledge about dental health from their friends while 33.3% came to know from their parents and 6.7% of them gained knowledge from TV/ radio.

dental floss to prevent the dental disease was apparently less understood by the population. From this it is clear that knowledge on dental floss has to be improved.^{9,10,11}

Knowledge about Oral hygiene is very important and helps us to preserve the oral health. Most of the people acquire knowledge from different source like media, friend and family in this study. 60% of the individuals in our survey mentioned their parents as their primary source of information about oral health, while 33.3% referred other sources, indicating that all parents do not actively try to teach their kids about oral health. These results were found to be consistent with those of earlier studies, providing further proof that the subjects' oral health are not being educated by all parents.^{11,12}

Results from systemic reviews recommended tooth brushing twice a day, the ideal tooth brushing time is 2min. This habit helps us to prevent the formation of carries as well as improve gingival health. In our study 55% of them had a habit of rinsing their mouth after food whereas 45% of patients rinsed their teeth once in the morning. The habit of rinsing the mouth after every meal is a goal to good oral health.^{13,14,15}

Majority i.e., 87.3% of the patients believed that bleeding gums is natural phenomenon which occurs due to ageing but they didn't know the fact that it occurs due to poor gum health. 12.7% of them said there was indeed a relation between bleeding gums and poor gum health but patient did not consider it important to visit a dentist.^{16,17}

A further finding from this study reveals individuals who are employed showed good oral health awareness than who are unemployed. This occurs due to the stress of unemployment which indirectly affects the oral health. Fear of pain is one of the important factors which prevent the patients from visiting the dentist hence awareness about the dental health should prioritize more.^{17,18}

CONCLUSION

The participants in this study exhibit a lack of awareness and a negligent attitude regarding their oral health. Education and motivation on oral health and associated issues are therefore desperately needed. The population as well as the health care workers frequently overlook this serious issue, as indicated by the cross-sectional study's findings. Dental professionals need

to raise awareness about dental health and oral hygiene. Through various outreach programs in the areas that are less accessible to oral health institutions, this method needs to be expanded beyond the clinics. In addition, media can educate the public and encourage dental visits on a regular basis. In conclusion, it is our duty as dental professionals to educate and inspire this group of people who lack formal education so that we may make progress towards establishing a healthy environment.

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