

# **CO-RELATION BETWEEN ORAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND ORAL HYGIENE STATUS AMONG PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN NAGPUR CITY- A QUESTIONNAIRE BASED SURVEY**

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## INTRODUCTION

General health depends upon the good oral health. Health is now a days universal human need for the entire human population. General health cannot be attained without oral health. The mouth is generally regarded as the mirror of the body.<sup>1</sup> Oral health education begins from home and family. Growing children need proper guidance for their healthy growth and development and maintain hygiene of their teeth.<sup>2</sup> Oral health affects the general health, well-being, education and overall development of children and their families, and diminishes the quality of life. Maintaining the oral health since childhood is utmost important to be free from dental caries and gingival and periodontal diseases. Therefore lot of efforts have been made where various dental health information programs have been conducted in schools and other settings.<sup>5,6</sup> Other than this it has been observed that Several parental factors influence children's use of oral health services. Some of the studies have shown that children's oral hygiene status correlate positively with those of their parents.<sup>4</sup> All around the world it has been noticed that poor oral hygiene is occurring due to increasing plaque and calculus deposits with increasing age have been reported among children and adolescents.<sup>7-9</sup> Thus, the present study, was an attempt made to evaluate oral health awareness and oral hygiene status among parents and their children in Nagpur city to check their level of awareness and knowledge for maintenance of oral hygiene.

Therefore, the aim of the study was to examine the oral cavity of children in the age group of 4 to 6 years and correlate it with the baseline knowledge and opinion of their parents.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the overall attitude of parents towards the dental health of their children.
2. To assess the oral hygiene practices of their children.
3. To assess the dental caries status of children.
4. Association between the parental attitude and oral hygiene practices in children.
5. Association between the parental attitude and caries status in children.
6. Association between the oral hygiene practices and dental caries status of children.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Nagpur city. Ethical committee approval was obtained before the initiation of the study. Total of 1000 preschool children in the age group of 4 to 6 years were checked for their oral hygiene and dental caries index. A total of 20 multiple choice and closed ended Questionnaire were provided to the parents of children. The results were assessed based on the knowledge of awareness among parents of these children. The responses of parents on each question were scored and categorized.

### Inclusion Criteria

1. Full term children were selected to ensure a healthy sample selection.
2. Presence of normal number, size and shape of teeth.
3. Absence of any local or systemic condition.

### Exclusion Criteria

1. Parent's refusal to give informed consent.
2. Children with missing/malformed/supernumerary teeth.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Assessment of oral hygiene and dental caries among children**

Oral Hygiene			Dental Caries		
Poor	Fair	Good	No caries	Moderate caries	High caries
425	219	356	73	374	553
		P<0.001			P<0.001

**Table 2: Assessment of knowledge of parents regarding oral hygiene and dental caries**

Poor knowledge	400
Adequate knowledge	504
Excellent knowledge	96

**Table 3: Assessment of parental attitude towards dental health of the children**

Oral hygiene			Dental caries prevention		
Important	Moderately important	Not important	Important	Moderately important	Not important
433	364	203	421	306	273
		P<0.001			P<0.001

## DISCUSSION

Good oral health is completely based on awareness of good dietary habits and oral hygiene practices among the general population.<sup>5</sup> The need for making parents aware of the maintenance of oral hygiene measures including brushing methods, flossing and importance of preventive measures for the children via school dental programs have proven to be effective.<sup>10-11</sup> The literacy level of the parents is considered as very important for assessing oral health status as it relates to the level of information about importance of oral health of children in the society. The oral health awareness could have been more in children of medical and dental background, but our data did not classify the children according to their parent's profession.<sup>2</sup>

According to our study, maximum number of children had poor oral hygiene and high caries activity was also observed. Based on our results of questionnaire which were provided to the parents of these children, maximum of them had adequate knowledge regarding oral hygiene

and dental caries; still they were not up to the mark in maintenance of oral health of their child. We have also assessed the parental attitude towards dental health of the children which showed that maximum parents gave their positive response towards the importance of oral health but still the oral hygiene was not important according to the 27% parents. They think that dental caries affected tooth will exfoliate so there is no need to take much care and effort for the same. It was also observed that all parents needed education on importance of regular dental visits, dietary habits and oral hygiene procedures in young children so as to be specific in that.<sup>5</sup>

The efforts through the medium of schools, effective oral health promotion of school staff, students and their families prove to be helpful. Oral health promotion can be easily integrated with that of general health, school curriculum and activities to incorporate these things in children since early years of life.

As parents just take their children to the dentist only at the time of pain, it has now become necessary to make them aware regarding the preventive protocol to avoid complications in future. The present study also emphasizes that the parent's responsibility towards their child's oral health is directly related to a collective approach of the school and doctors which will later helpful in prevention of oral diseases and thus leading quality life.

## CONCLUSION

The oral hygiene directly affects the overall general health of an individual. There has been need arised for awareness programmes related to oral hygiene among children and their parents. There is has been a low level of dental awareness and initiation for dental visits in parents of preschool children in Indian population. This study initiates a thought-provoking response from dental health educators who carry out dental camps in different setups and in different populations.

According to the study, a national policy is needed to incorporate oral health and hygiene in the educational curriculum at early levels of schooling so that the children are made aware from the early stages of life so that they do not fail to maintain the oral hygiene needs that may affect their quality of life.

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