

# Incorporation of Oral Health in Primary Health Care - Challenges and Opportunities.

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## Abstract

*Oral Health Care is considered as fundamental component of Primary Health Care. It provides potency to essential medicinal services conveyance system with the aid of making an investment in prevention and deducting avoidable dots as a consequence enacting a significant tool for native health. Oral wellbeing influence one's general wellbeing and enhanced person's satisfaction. Investigations have been done which have accomplished to discover more methods to draw in families and sufferers making them accessible to oral health care measures. A movement named National Oral Health Care programme aims to provide accessible, low cost and eminent oral health care considerations to every single person nationwide. Innovations with the aid of health care professionals and oral health maintenance team have been performed to reduce health care expenditure with excellent care.*

*For such innovations we need to boom our investment for primary health care training programmes for practitioners. Impact should be made on those population which are considered special that is having maternal and child groups. There is a remarkable work force to overcome the threats of oral health diseases. The need of this hour is to listen to the voice of the patients and families who have the epitome of oral diseases. Inclusion of oral health examination in routine medical health check-up will be of great help for the longevity of the people.*

**Keywords:** Oral health care, primary health care, ASHA, oral diseases, oral hygiene, preventive measures.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Primary health care (PHC) solely expresses that it is entire of society way to deal with overall health care and welfare focused on the need of a person, families and communities. It directs the important aspects of health and centers on the broad and interdependent outlook of physical, mental, social health and well-being. [1] This system is based on the Primary Health Centre (PHC) and these PHC's provide treatment liberated from cost.[2] So it's very important to look into all the aspects, oral health which is also very important for the diagnosis of any underlined diseases should be taken into consideration.

Oral health and medical examination both go hand in hand. Each PHC has 5-6 sub-centers staffed by healthcare workers which provide services like immunization, basic curative care, mental and child health services and preventive services. When it comes to Health coverage, for 28 villages there is one PHC for them, in terms of rural population there is one PHC for 597 people approximately residing in rural area of state.

Following are the components of PHC:

- Instructions about persuading medicinal issues and strategies of preventing of avoiding and how to manage them.
- Advancement of nourishment supply and legitimate nutrition.
- A satisfactory supply essential and secure water
- child health care and maternal which includes family planning.
- Immunization against irresistible ailments.
- Avoidance and control of local endemic diseases.
- Suitable treatment of common illnesses and injuries.
- Arrangement of fundamental drugs.

Considering diseases, oral cavity is more appropriate site of examination to rule out any diseases as there are specific signs that occurs in the oral cavity and not on other parts of body, which may not give proper diagnosis if not checked for all the signs and symptoms, therefore oral hygiene should be maintained and oral examination should be done as individual's oral condition imparts their general health. Therefore the dental professional can play a vital part of the PHC system.

A PHC team can help the patient to acknowledge the significance of oral hygiene in context to their general well-being. If not proper, the oral diseases reduces the personal satisfaction and profitability both at school and at workplace. Dental care is related with hindered development in children and can influence their appearance, confidence and discourse.

So as we now know the importance of a dentist in a primary health care system, it is now of great importance to look after oral health and incorporate. the oral health awareness in PHC and this can be further incorporated in the lifestyle of the villagers. Therefore, oral diseases prevention and health promotion is the imperative to integrate oral health with general healthcare. [3]

In this article we will see the challenges and opportunities including the dental professional and requirement of the oral hygiene procedures.

## **OPPORTUNITIES:**

There are numbers of opportunities for dentist in oral health to be incorporated at PHC. As oral hygiene plays a very important role in maintaining a healthy lifestyle of a person. Common risk factor approach is very important as it helps the dental professional to diagnose many underlying diseases. At PHC level as we know, there are many team workers like ASHA workers who plays a major role in the life of a villagers. ASHA workers educate the villagers, guides them to live a healthy lifestyle, provides essential health care. National Rural Health mission is to give a well-trained health care workers that is ASHA for every village in the country to look after the villagers to at least get the basic health care services

by ASHA workers.

As we know the importance of ASHA in a village. The role of dentist enters at this point such that an ASHA worker can be trained in such a way about the oral hygiene and maintaining the overall health of the person to educate for longevity and productivity of his life. A dental professional can train the ASHA workers to educate the villagers and burst their myth bubbles. People are not aware about the oral hygiene and are rebounded by the fact that it does not matter to care about their oral hygiene which is why they still have such deleterious habits like kharra and pan chewing, bidi smoking, tobacco consumption and they say no to stop these habits, which causes oral cancer, having an ASHA trained for helping them quit their habit at village level by educating them about the worst outcome of the habit. Having such signs in oral cavity a Dentist at PHC level can detect and diagnosed the oral cancer which can be treated at early stage leading to reduction in prevalence of oral cancer cases in India.

Villagers follow the age long ritual of cleaning their teeth with neem stick, which does not clean their teeth properly and lead to periodontal diseases and ultimately early loss of teeth occurs which shakes the confidence of a person due to poor esthetic and inefficiency at workplace leading to loss of productivity for the working , so to prevent such scene to occur in future scenario ASHA should be trained by the dental professionals to educate the benefits of brushing their teeth with toothbrush and toothpaste and teaching them to brush their teeth in proper manner, a proper brushing technique should be demonstrated which will be the easier for the villagers to understand and application of the correct brushing technique in their routine. As ASHA provide basic medicines to the villagers, it should be made mandatory to provide each and every villager an oral hygiene kit/ dental kit including toothbrush, toothpaste and a tongue cleaner. A dentist must train the ASHA to educate people about when to change the brush, how many times brushing should be done in a day, amount of toothpaste to be taken in a tooth brush while brushing their teeth. Brushing teeth with tooth brush properly will lead to the reduction in periodontal diseases leading to maintenance of esthetic and efficiency would be made at workplace leading to growth and increase in the productivity of the country. A dental professional must train the ASHA about the nutrition essential for pregnant women to overcome the disease which might occur to the child when born, educating people about the ideal diet requirement of an individual to prevent themselves from deficiency of nutrients. Nutritional counseling and education can be provided to the villagers by interpersonal communication, group discussion, media posters and wall paintings. One of the important education to be provided to the villagers is the consumption of safe water. Villagers should be made aware about the fluorosis, causes of occurrence of fluorosis ,and prevention of the same . ASHA must be trained by the dental professional to at least provide initial fluoride application for apt age group of children and educate the parents to take their children to the dentist at PHC for proper guidance and fluoride application, also pit and fissure sealant application should be done as after eruption of permanent teeth so as to prevent the occurrence of caries .

Also they execute basic training programs for ASHA like birth preparedness and complication readiness. Guides the villagers about the immediate measures for pain relief like – warm saline rinses, using clove oil, dispense single dose of Paracetamol when required. [4] One common visible role of ASHA is to ‘take care of the pregnant women’ which includes three prenatal checkups and institutional delivery. [5]

As we know that early childhood that is between 0-6 years is the most important period in the life of child.[6] Co-coordinating with Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) to ensure oral health checkup for all children was started on Feb 6 2013 in Palghar Thane Districts of Maharashtra. This program includes screening and treating also manages problems which includes defect at birth, lackness, illnesses and tentative delays. Objectives are early recognition and mediation for children from birth to 18 years [7] and all infants children

born at public health facilities and home would be screened by health profession and ASHA. Primary health care screening and intervention for dental problems. [8] For example- Laser Fluorescence and optical co-operation tomography for caries diagnoses and smoking cessation program.

AHSA should be trained for the oral health care of the elderly which have a special requirement because of the dental problem associated with old age like proper use of denture, cleaning the oral cavity and denture should be taught. All the work of ASHA will be supervised and monitored by the dental professional recruited by the PHC.

#### **CHALLENGES:**

Common distress along with the accumulation of any new healthcare services is need of time. PHC vendors had time limitations as a crucial barrier to provide dental health education. There were crowded clinic waiting areas, as they were occupied in the provision of vaccination and child maternal care and slightly difficult to change the mindset of villagers and encourage them to pay attention towards their oral hygiene.

Educational factors - Some PHC carriers believed that supplying preventive oral health care services was not their task due to the fact that they were not adequately practicing to examine oral health. Nowadays people go where they get good quality services. They usually visit the hospital that has advanced technology as an alternative to dispensaries wherein there are less equipment and facilities. Installment restrictions-Money issues are substantial and we recognize it should be acknowledged [4].

Economy plays a very essential role for the people to get their treatment done as due to lack of money patients generally avoid going to the dentist. Some dental procedures demands lumpsum amount of money for the technology used and treatment provided by them .

#### **ADVANTAGES:**

A dentist at PHC can provide standardized preventive and remedial oral health care . They can minimize the oro- facial diseases and other abnormalities hence improving the quality of lifestyle [9]. National wide scaling would accelerate coverage of variety of patients to evaluate health services. Students should come up with the opportunity to work in rural primary and secondary school and in maternal and child health clinics inside the health care system. This helps to familiarize the patients about the scheme of how oral health is incorporated in daily medical care. Implementing a health recreational area can approach to integrate referred children to a supply of primary care.

#### **DISADVANTAGES:**

It requires more time and expenditure for a dental treatment. Diverse geographical and demographics adds barrier that have an impact on the result [9]. There is no such specific attempt accredited or recognized worldwide [10]. There is an increased workload for the already overburdened workers. The burden of oral health issues is a prime public health problem in both growing and developing countries, because of excessive prevalence, incidence and the burden of oral diseases occurring and the treatment for treating the diseases costs more than a fortune.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The recruitment of a dental professional is immensely essential for betterment of the oral hygiene for a healthy lifestyle in PHC is the lifestyle of the people at village level coming under PHC. The dentist plays a very important role by ensuring that they maintain and practice oral hygiene in a proper way with the help of ASHA, and by doing opportunistic screening of the oral cancer which can be diagnosed by the dentist in an early stage which will reduce the number of the cases in the country. Maintaining a proper oral hygiene

improve the efficiency of the people and increase the productivity of the country. Therefore, by stating these we can say that incorporation of a dentist in maintaining oral hygiene for the healthy lifestyle is necessary.

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