

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND ORAL HYGIENE PRACTICE AMONG PATIENTS VISITING DENTAL SECTION OF UNIVERSITY MEDICAL AND DENTAL COLLEGE, FAISALABAD

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INTRODUCTION

Oral and Dental Health education can play an important role in improving the patient's knowledge, attitudes and practices towards their dental health.¹ Most of the dental diseases can be prevented on individual and public level by providing oral health related education among the general population. Oral health knowledge is considered to be an essential pre requisite for health related behavior.²

According to the National Oral Health Survey of Pakistan, majority of the people do not have access to the basic curative dental health facilities in the public and the private sectors. This report states that in the age group of 12-15 years, on an average, every individual has lost about two to three teeth due to dental caries.³ Majority of population in South East Asian region do not have specific trends to visit qualified health facilities. This may be due to socioeconomic and educational factors, but lack of knowledge and its improper implementation are also very important.⁴

The evaluation of available sources of information and oral hygiene practice is very important as they form the base line of the planning and decision making for provision of health services.⁵

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This study was a part of a larger hospital based survey that was conducted simultaneously in different teaching dental hospitals and dental health facilities of the country both

from public as well as from the private sector. A questionnaire was specially designed for this survey. The purpose of this study in particular was to identify the sources of information regarding dental health and their impact on the oral hygiene practices.

Objectives:

To assess the Oro-dental health knowledge and its practice in the patients visiting Dental Section of University Medical and Dental College, Faisalabad.

METHODOLOGY

This was a cross sectional descriptive hospital based survey, conducted from 1st January 2010 to 31st December 2010. A total of 2652 subjects were interviewed on a questionnaire using Non Probability convenient sampling technique.

Inclusion criteria:

1. Patients visiting Dental Section of University Medical and Dental College Faisalabad, for their oral and dental problems.
2. Patients who gave verbal consent to take part in the study.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Patients suffering from debilitating diseases or severe maxillofacial trauma and were unable to respond to the questionnaire.
2. Patients who refused to take part in the study.

Data collection procedure:

A special questionnaire was designed and permission was sought from the ethical review committee of the Institute. Patients visiting to the dental OPD were selected and an informed

verbal consent was taken from these patients to take part in the study.

Data analysis:

SPSS version 17.0 was used to analyze the collected data.

RESULTS

A total of 2652 study participants were selected in which 41.7%, received information regarding oral health mainly from media and 46.2% from friends and community members, whereas dental profession's contribution was only 12.1% (Table 1). It was found that 42.5% (Male: 46.8%; Female: 53.2%) of study participants had visited the dentist during the last 6 months (Table 2, 3). It was also found that 636 Males and 588 Females used to brush at least once a day whereas 168 subjects accepted that they don't brush at all.

Table 1. Sources of information about oral health

Source of information	Frequency	Percent
Print and electronic media	1104	41.7
Friends and community	1224	46.2
Dentist/dental health care workers	324	12.1
Total	2652	100.0

Table 2. Past six months dental visits

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1127	42.5
No	1525	57.5
Total	2652	100.0

Table 3. Gender* past 6 months dental visits cross tabulation

		Past 6 months dental visits		Total
Gender		Yes	No	
	Male	527	913	1440
	Female	600	612	1212
Total		1127	1525	2652

Table 4. Gender* frequency of brushing cross tabulation

		Frequency of brushing				Total
Gender		Once	Twice	Weekly	No	
	Male	636	516	168	120	1440
	Female	588	516	60	48	1212
Total		1224	1032	228	168	2652

DISCUSSION

This was a cross sectional descriptive, hospital based survey to identify and correlate different factors affecting the oral hygiene status thus affecting different dental disease conditions in population visiting a teaching dental hospital. Patients comply better with oral health care regimens when informed and positively reinforced. The motives prompting people to seek preventive dental care include the beliefs that one is susceptible to dental diseases, that dental problems are serious and that the dental treatment is beneficial. This Health education attempts to change behaviors by altering knowledge, attitudes and perceptions.⁶ The participants in this study reported to receive information regarding oral health mainly from media, however this information was mainly certain brand specific and was focusing on only one or two aspects. The role of dental profession is questionable. The public oral health awareness should be improved through the school health programs as well as different community based projects in collaboration with media.

Only 42.5% of the study population reported that they have visited dentist during last 6 months and this finding was consistent with the findings of Harikiran.⁴

This survey also found that only 38.9% of the study subjects were used to brush their teeth two or more times a day which was very consistent with the findings of Harikiran⁴ where it was 38.8%.* These findings present almost similar results as the earlier studies in different population groups of the same region.^{7,8,9} Most of the dental problems can be prevented by simply providing awareness on the community level. This can be better, cost effective alternative to more expensive dental procedures. There should be a continuous ongoing oral health awareness program that must be a part of curriculum at the school, college and university levels. Dental professionals, Dental Marketing Agencies and media should join hands with the government Health Care Authorities to help the general population in preventing dental problems by improving their knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and habits towards oral hygiene.

CONCLUSION

Results of this study suggest that oral health awareness and its practice among study participants was poor and needs to be improved. Based upon these findings, systematic community-oriented oral health promotion programs are needed to target the lifestyles in different general population groups.

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