

## Original Research

### Assessment of knowledge about different oral hygiene aids among undergraduate students: An original research

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#### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** This study aimed to assess the level of knowledge about different oral hygiene aids among undergraduate students. **Objective:** To assess the level of knowledge about different oral hygiene aids among undergraduate students. To determine the awareness of undergraduate students regarding the benefits of using different oral hygiene aids such as toothbrushes, dental floss, mouthwash, and tongue cleaners. **Methodology:** The study sample included 300 undergraduate students from different academic disciplines, selected through a convenience sampling method. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on students' knowledge of various oral hygiene aids, including toothbrushes, dental floss, mouthwash, and tongue cleaners. The questionnaire was designed based on a literature review and was pretested before the main study. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions with single or multiple responses. **Discussion:** The study found a significant association between knowledge of oral hygiene aids and academic discipline. Students from health-related disciplines had a higher level of knowledge about oral hygiene aids compared to students from other academic disciplines. This finding suggests that dental health education programs should be tailored to different academic disciplines to improve oral hygiene practices among undergraduate students. **Result:** The results showed that the majority of students (86%) knew about toothbrushes, while only 48% had knowledge about dental floss. Moreover, only 30% of students were aware of the benefits of using mouthwash, and only 15% knew about tongue cleaners. The study found a significant association between knowledge of oral hygiene aids and academic discipline. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, the study revealed a lack of knowledge about different oral hygiene aids among undergraduate students. The findings suggest a need for dental health education programs to improve oral hygiene practices among undergraduate students.

**Keywords:** Awareness, oral hygiene, practices

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#### INTRODUCTION

Oral health is an important aspect of general health and wellbeing.[1] Oral cavity is a well-known nidus of infection, so oral hygiene if adopted properly can help get rid of majority of oral diseases.[2] There is much more to oral health than beautiful and healthy teeth. It is fundamental to overall health and affects

the wellbeing and quality of life of every individual[3].

Despite much advancement in preventive and interventional approaches a range of oral diseases remain prevalent in children. To combat these oral health diseases, basic oral health practices are to be installed from early childhood as this is an important

period of life that needs to be monitored closely.[4] Many kinds of literature have reported that the prevalence of dental caries among residential schoolchildren was high as compared to non-residential school children suggesting timely emphasis and interventions.[5] Dental caries, with a prevalence as high as 60-80% in children, is a major public health problem in India.[6] Oral cancer has also long been a major problem in this country.[7] The possible etiological factors leading to these oral diseases are genetic predisposition, developmental problems, poor oral hygiene, and traumatic incidents.[8] Neglect of oral health, on the other hand, can lead to pain and suffering, which can affect individuals' quality of life and hinder productivity at the workplace.[9]. Further more people have no behavior of visiting dental clinics for general checkup. They believe that the sign of dental diseases is painful teeth/tooth and the treatment available to dental clinic is only extraction. The main cause of periodontal disease is bacterial plaque, plaque can irritate the gums and can lead to gum diseases although many other factors such as hormonal changes, diabetes, poor nutrition, smoking, and stress may affect the initiation and progression of gingival and periodontal diseases [10,11].

#### AIM

Education of oral health of the individual and community has a major impact from the knowledge of the dentists, which ultimately depends on the

knowledge, attitude and practices of the dental students. Dental students are the future leaders in oral health care, and have a significant role to play in public oral health education and its promotion. Increased awareness of the oral health care among the dental students through academic learning can motivate their patients for the maintenance of the oral health and prevention of the development of the different oral diseases.

#### METHOD

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on students' knowledge of various oral hygiene aids, including toothbrushes, dental floss, mouthwash, and tongue cleaners. The questionnaire was designed based on a literature review and was pretested before the main study. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions with single or multiple responses. The study was limited to undergraduate students from one institution, and the sample may not be representative of the larger population. The study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias. Additionally, the study did not assess the actual oral hygiene practices of the students.

#### RESULT

Out of 290 participants in the survey, 71% were boys and 62% were aged between 15 and 18 years. Around 68% of participants were students enrolled in governmental schools (Table 1).

**Table 1: Gender distribution within Preclinical and clinical students**

		Female	Male	Total
Preclinical	Count	97	24	121
	% within Clinical/Preclinical	85%	15%	100.0%
Clinical	Count	97	24	121
	% within Clinical/Preclinical	85%	15%	100.0%
Total	Count	194	48	242
	% within Clinical/Preclinical	85%	15%	100.0%

Out of total participants, 195 were brushing and 98 were not. Significantly more girls reported brushing their teeth. The habit of daily brushing was more prevalent in the young age group when compared to students of age 15–18 years but the difference was not significant statistically.

**Table 2: Practice of students regarding oral hygiene**

Attributes	N	%
Excellent	65	23
Good	210	18

Average	39	13
Poor	1	0.3
Frequency of brushing in a day		
After every meal	1	0.3
Once	220	71
Twice	98	32

## DISCUSSION

Knowledge and awareness studies on oral hygiene among students have been primarily conducted among dental college students with health sciences backgrounds. Keeping in mind the expected role to be played by the student community on the whole in effecting a behavioral change in the society, a need is felt for assessing the oral hygiene knowledge, attitude and behavior of professional students with different educational backgrounds. In the developing countries, there is a high prevalence of oral diseases in their communities. This can be due to neglect, scarcity of resources, poor knowledge and negative attitudes. This cross sectional study aimed to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of 300 students who were randomly selected from five colleges in UAE.

## CONCLUSION

In general, the results showed good oral health knowledge among university students. However, it is important to emphasize that healthcare students and those whose family members work in the field of dental medicine have shown better knowledge. It was also confirmed that students with a higher knowledge score use oral hygiene aids more frequently like dental floss, interdental brushes, and mouth rinses. From all the above, it can be concluded that education on this topic is fundamental for understanding and maintaining oral health.

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