

## *Original Article*

### **Attitude and Knowledge of Mothers Regarding Oral Hygiene Status of School Children**

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

**Background:** Parents' attitudes have a positive impact on the state of children's oral health. The present study was conducted to determine attitude and knowledge of mothers regarding oral hygiene status of school children. **Materials & Methods:** The present study was conducted on 380 children of class 1- 6<sup>th</sup> standard and their parents. All subjects were provided with questionnaire and asked to fill it. The response was recorded on performa. **Results:** It was found that 170 parents were not aware that one should visit dentist. 190 parents thought reason for tooth brushing was white teeth, 170 parents were not aware that sugar causes decay, 140 parents were disagree about dental plaque causes gingival bleeding and 250 parents thought that tooth brushing prevents tooth decay. The difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). 240 parents thought that frequency of brushing should be once daily, occasion of brushing should be in morning (250) and time spent on brushing should be more than 3 minutes (230). The difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** There is need to educate the mothers regarding oral hygiene status of their children. The knowledge and awareness were found to be poor.

**Key words:** Attitude, Knowledge, Oral health.

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

Health is the product of the interaction of individual and family, culture, social structure and physical development. During the last decades, studies have pointed out that different circumstances influence oral health, among them: individual, such as lifestyle and dietary patterns; and community such as regional and socioeconomic characteristics.<sup>1</sup> It is known that the impact on the reduction of caries is the result of investment in health education and promotion, the collective and individual level, transcending the provision of only curative services, emphasizing the importance of reorientation of concepts and practices in the dentistry field.<sup>2</sup>

Oral diseases are among the most common and widespread problems throughout the world. Poor oral health may have a considerable impact on children's quality of life, which leads to general deterioration of health. Children with poor oral health are more likely to miss school than are those with good oral health. Pain, discomfort, sleepless nights and time missed from school or work are common problems for many children and adults around the world.<sup>3</sup> Dental caries and periodontal diseases are considered a public health problem due to their high levels of severity and prevalence, especially in specific populations, requiring from the dentistry a direction of its activities for prevention. Parents' attitudes have a positive impact on the state of children's oral health; because the parents control tooth

brushing and sugar consumption, the children develop positive oral health habits.<sup>4</sup> The parents are primarily responsible for almost all their children’s health problems. Therefore, their role is fundamental in raising children to practice preventive oral health throughout their lives.<sup>5</sup> The present study was conducted to determine attitude and knowledge of mothers regarding oral hygiene status of school children.

**MATERIALS & METHODS**

The present study was conducted in the department of Pedodontics. It comprised of 380 children of class 1- 6<sup>th</sup> standard and their parents. The study was approved from the institutional ethical committee. All were informed regarding the study and written consent was obtained. All subjects were provided with questionnaire and asked to fill it. The response was recorded on performa. It was questionnaire regarding attitude and knowledge of oral hygiene practice about school children. Results were subjected to statistical analysis. P value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

**RESULTS**

**Table I Knowledge of mothers**

Questionnaire	Response	Education		P value
		School	College	
One should visit dentist	Agree	50	30	0.01
	Disagree	80	50	
	Don’t know	100	70	
Reason of tooth brush	White teeth	110	80	0.05
	Prevent decay	120	70	
Sugar causes decay	Agree	70	50	0.02
	Disagree	60	30	
	Don’t know	100	70	
Dental plaque causes gingival bleeding	Agree	60	40	0.05
	Disagree	80	60	
	Don’t know	90	50	
Prevention of tooth decay	Tooth brushing	170	80	0.02
	Flossing	40	30	
	Pit & fissure sealants	20	40	

Table I shows that on asking about, one should visit dentist, 170 parents were not aware. 190 parents thought reason for tooth brushing was white teeth, 170 parents were not aware that sugar causes decay, 140 parents were disagree about dental plaque causes gingival bleeding and 250 parents thought that tooth brushing prevents tooth decay. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

**Table II Practice of mothers**

Questions		Number	P value
Frequency of brushing	Once	240	0.05
	Twice	140	
Occasion of brushing	Morning	250	0.01
	After meal	130	
Time spent on brushing	<3 mins	150	0.02
	>3 mins	230	

Table II shows that 240 parents thought that frequency of brushing should be once daily, occasion of brushing should be in morning (250) and time spent on brushing should be more than 3 minutes (230). The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

## DISCUSSION

Socio-economic and cultural characteristics directly influence health care. This aspect deserves special attention, as a health program is more effective from the knowledge of the population's profile. There are few studies that focus on knowledge, attitudes and oral health practices of educators and children. Little is discussed in literature on the knowledge of children about oral health and even less is found about the vision of educators about these basic principles.<sup>6</sup>

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends integrating oral health promotion into curricular activities in the schools. Moreover, educational practices should consider other issues such as healthy eating, smoking, sexual health, cardiac diseases and obesity. It seems, however, that the success of programs promoting oral health in the schools depends largely on reinforcement at home, especially by the parents.<sup>7</sup>

In present study we found that 170 parents were not aware that one should visit dentist. 190 parents thought reason for tooth brushing was white teeth, 170 parents were not aware that sugar causes decay, 140 parents were disagree about dental plaque causes gingival bleeding and 250 parents thought that tooth brushing prevents tooth decay.

Chia et al<sup>8</sup> found that most of the children presented a mean index of oral hygiene (IOHS = 1.51, Standard deviation = 0.48). The parents' attitudes related to oral health were not very good. Many of them did not floss their children's teeth; the bottle-fed children did not brush after feeding. The consumption of sugar was associated with the presence of dental plaque in the children. Nevertheless, in most cases, tooth brushing was performed by the parents and was associated with a good dmft index in the children. The state of children's oral health in the present study was good. However, the parents' attitudes in relation to oral health were not good.

In present study, 240 parents thought that frequency of brushing should be once daily, occasion of brushing should be in morning (250) and time spent on brushing should be more than 3 minutes (230).

Okada et al<sup>9</sup> found that 70.8% of the children brushed their teeth two or three times per day. Some (21.8%) of the parents report that their children brush their own teeth, and it is recommended that the adults perform, or help, children less than five years of age with their brushing. These children are only partially capable of performing brushing, due to the lack of dexterity and knowledge necessary for proper cleaning.

This fact may have influenced the good state of oral health of the children in the present study, having few decayed, missing or filled teeth, since a statistically significant association was observed between the father/mother in the tooth brushing of the children having a low dmft index.

## CONCLUSION

There is need to educate the mothers regarding oral hygiene status of their children. The knowledge and awareness were found to be poor.

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