

The attitude on dental hygiene and prevention of tooth decay among the school children (5-10 years) in a selected school at Chidambaram

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Abstract

Background: Dental care starts from infancy to old age. Even before the emergence of the first tooth, the attitude on care for the oral cavity can highly affect a person's future appearance and health. The present study was planned to assess the attitude on dental hygiene among the school children.

Methods: This study was conducted with 5 to 10 years children studying at Sri Meenakshi Primary School, Annamalai Nagar, Chidambaram, using quasi experimental design.

Results: In the pre-test, 49 (51.04%) of the children had unfavourable attitude and 11 (11.45%) of them had highly favourable attitude. Whereas, in the post-test, majority of 58 (60.41%) had favourable attitude and only 2 (2.8%) of them had unfavourable attitude.

Conclusions: The study concluded that the structured-teaching program establishes an acceptable positive attitude towards the dental hygiene and its importance on tooth decay prevention.

Keywords: dental health education, school children attitude on dental hygiene, attitude on dental hygiene among pre-schoolers

1. Introduction

Oral health is fundamental to general health and well-being. A healthy mouth enables an individual to talk, eat and socialize without experiencing active disease, discomfort or embarrassment. Oral diseases represent a major public health problem. About 90% of school children world-wide and most adults have experienced caries [1].

Dental caries is considered to be a major public health problem globally due to its high prevalence and significant social impact. The World Health Organization reports 60-90% of schoolchildren worldwide have experienced caries, with the disease being most prevalent in Asian and Latin American countries [7].

Oral disease can be considered as a public health problem due to its high prevalence and significant social impact. A positive attitude towards oral health is influenced by better knowledge in taking care of the teeth. Appropriate oral health education can help to cultivate healthy oral health practice [3].

Oral health is an integral component of general health. Oral health is an integral component of general health. Therefore, the mouth has to be kept clean and healthy. School age is a period of overall development. During this period the child learns to become productive members of the peer group. If proper oral hygiene habits are cultivated during this period, habits will go a long way in maintaining the oral health of a child throughout the life. Childhood is the age where children develops reflexes to maintain general hygiene practices and attitude toward health [5].

Dental health education is defined as "a process that informs, motivates and help persons to adopt and maintain healthy practices and lifestyles; advocates environmental

change as needed to facilitate this goal; and conducts professional training and research to the same end" [4].

The school oral health education program is believed to be a cost-effective method for promoting oral health. The KAP (knowledge, attitude, practice) model of oral health education is often the foundation of most health education programs [6].

2. Methods

Quantitative approach, Quasi-experimental design. One group pre-test and post-test design was adopted for this study. The King's goal attainment theory was adopted for the conceptual framework.

The study was conducted with the School children (5-10 years), using Convenient sampling technique with the sample size of 96, at Sri Meenakshi Primary school, Chidambaram,

The students were utilized for the study after obtaining the permission from human ethical committee of Rajah Muthiah Medical College and the informed consent obtained from each study participant and they were explained about the purpose of the study.

3. Results

The attitude towards the dental hygiene and tooth decay prevention, in the pre-test, as 11 (11.45%) of them had highly favourable attitude and 49 (51.04%) of the children had unfavourable attitude. In the post-test, majority of 58 (60.41%) had favourable attitude and only 2 (2.8%) of them had unfavourable attitude.

Most of the children knew that the individual has prime responsibility toward maintaining healthy mouth and also

that periodic dental visit is required to maintain oral health.^[2]

Table 1: Comparison of pre-test and post-test Attitude on dental hygiene among the school children N: 96

S. No	Level of Attitude	Pre-test		Post-test	
		No.	(%)	No.	(%)
1.	Highly favourable attitude	11	11.45	58	60.41
2.	Moderately favourable attitude	36	37.3	36	37.5
3.	Unfavourable attitude	49	51.04	2	2.08

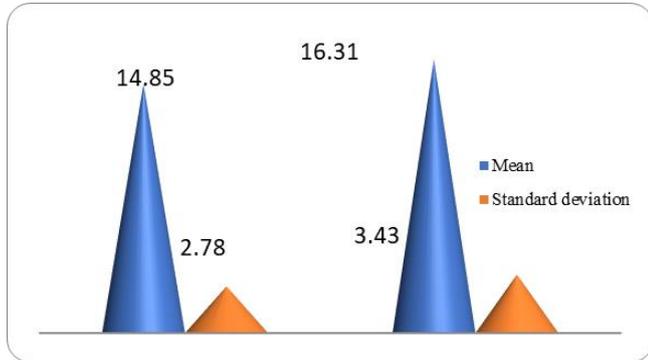


Fig 1: Comparison of mean and standard deviation of pre and post-test attitude of Dental hygiene and caries.

4. Discussion

The purpose of the study was to assess the attitude towards dental hygiene and caries prevention among the pre-schoolers.

The children demonstrated positive attitudes toward their dentists and high awareness of the link between oral health and systemic well-being. Most of the children (82.8%) accepted the fact that the general body health is related to oral and dental diseases^[1].

The awareness on importance of oral health should be motivated and Oral preventive care should be included in school curriculum so that children and teachers know the importance of the same^[2].

5. Conclusion

The present study assessed the attitude towards dental hygiene and caries prevention among the pre-schoolers and concluded that the structured-teaching program establishes an acceptable positive attitude.

An oral health promotion program has to involve partnership of school authorities, parents, and dental-care providers. Comprehensive oral health educational programs for both children and their parents are required to achieve this goal^[1].

6. References

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