



AWARNESS AND ATTITUDE ABOUT DENTAL TREATMENTS AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS OF CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Dental problems which is not diagnosed and treated in early stages of the problem might put forward a potential threat to the tooth in the forthcoming days. So early dental treatments plays a significant role in preventing adverse effects of such dental problems. Thereby it is very important to be aware of dental treatments in this modern world in order to utilize them in a beneficial manner. The purpose of the study was to know about the awareness and attitude about dental procedures among private school students and check whether the school students are aware of dental procedures and to find their Attitude about dental procedures among the students. This study was a questionnaire based study done on middle schools of south Indian population with proper permissions from the head of the institution. The questionnaire had 13 questions relating to the attitude and knowledge about dental procedures. Responses were collected, later the data was analyzed using SPSS software (version 14). It was found to be that the most frequently done procedure is scaling while the fear for dentist is mostly persuaded because of the fear of cost of treatment and fear of needles. And children these days are not aware of modern techniques like dental implants and think that these dental treatments cannot change their aesthetic looks. Children in the modern world are aware of basic procedures .but there exist a circle of students who don't even have the basic knowledge about these procedures. Nowadays even though technology is developing, the students are not aware of the recent updated modern dental treatments in the field of dentistry which could be very much beneficial to them in the current situation because of the changing lifestyle patterns and eating habits.

KEY WORDS: DENTAL ATTITUDE, DENTAL PROCEDURES, PAEDODONTICS, DENTAL AWARENESS.



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INTRODUCTION

Dental problems is one of the biggest and most severe problem in developing and developed countries like India, United states where there is an increased number of these dental problems Due to eating habits and modern life¹ but these problems can be treated by using various dental procedures done in dental clinics and hospitals .Awareness about the treatments which help in treating these diseases and curing them are inherited through various sources such as mass media, books, camps etc. But even there are some people who are not aware about these basic dental treatments such as scaling, filling and replacement of missing tooth as they lack external resources which will provide awareness about these treatments². There are various procedures done in a dental clinic which starts from a simple cleaning if tooth using high speed rotating instruments too to removal of tooth by surgical ways. Dentistry has 9 branches which include dental Implantology, pediatric dentistry, dental surgery, oral medicine, periodontics, prosthodontics, endodontic, conservative dentistry, public health dentistry. Dental implantology deals with procedures like replacement of missing tooth by a titanium rod to replace the tooth and the fixing the crown while prosthodontics deals with procedures like replacement of missing teeth by dentures mostly in elderly patients^{3,4}. Dental surgery deals with procedures related to surgeries on the maxillofacial region and tissues around this region⁵ while periodontics deals with procedures to cure diseases of the supporting tissues⁶. Oral medicine and radiology deals with diseases of oral cavity linked with medical disease and helps in analyzing the radiographs^{7,8}. Endodontic and conservative dentistry deals with procedures like root canal treatment and cavity fillings were the inside portion of the tooth which has dentin and pulp are replaced by dental materials and sealants and help in excavation of caries⁹, preventing extraction or removal of the tooth. Today Dentistry aims at developing treatments to cure diseases without involving the aesthetic aspect of the person. Treatments like dental

veneer, invisible braces, and implants all have proven to be a permanent solution to the problem. But still kids are not aware about these treatments^{10,11}. Early detection of these diseases and diagnosing with proper treatment will reduce the risk of dental problem in kid. Children these days have different perceptions and assumptions about these dental procedures through which they developed an attitude towards the dental treatments and developed a sense of fear¹² for these treatments which has led to decreased awareness about the modern dental procedures and their benefits.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was done on the population of Chennai. The subjects were taken from middle schools of private sector in Chennai. In India the middle school children largely comprises of students between age group 11- 16 studying 5th to 10th grade. A total of 250 students were requested to participate in the study, the study sample comprised of 125 boys and 125 girls. The subject's age limits were between 11 years to 16 years and had a mean age of 13 years. The questionnaire had 12 items in it which was designed in such a way to evaluate the awareness and attitude of dental procedures. Assessment of subject's awareness and attitude towards dental procedures included the questions relating the knowledge of basic dental procedures done in a dental clinic, attitude about dental care and body care, about awareness of modern dental treatments, regarding about fear for dental treatments, attitude towards regular visit to dentist and reason for the visit, about their attitude towards these procedures and about general awareness these procedures done in clinics. The subjects were requested to respond to each item in the specific format given in the end of each item. All the participants were allowed to choose one of the given three to four choices for each item in the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were obtained and the collected data was analyzed using SPSS software (version 14). The questionnaire given is as follows.

AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE ABOUT DENTAL PROCEDURES AMONG STUDENTS

1. What will you do if you feel you have a dental problem?
 - a) Visit a Dentist b) look into some website on Internet c) Ignore the problem
2. If your teeth is not straight (Not properly aligned)
 - a) They can be corrected b) they cannot be corrected. c) no idea
3. What does Gum bleeding mean?
 - a) Healthy gums b) Unhealthy gums c) no idea
4. How often do you visit the dentist for the treatment?
 - a) Regularly every 6 months b) occasionally c) when I have pain d) never visited
5. The Treatment(s) I sought during my last visit to the dentist was
 - a) For regular check-up b) To clean my teeth c) any other treatment d) not visited
6. Do you think dental treatment is necessary for better body health?
 - a) Yes b) No c) No idea
7. Are u aware of the term implants and why are they used?
 - a) Yes. b) No
8. What do you think is the treatment for Dental caries or decayed tooth?
 - a) Extraction b) Filling c) Scaling
9. What do you think Extraction is?
 - a) Putting a crown for a tooth b) Pulling out a tooth. c) Replacing broken tooth
10. If you have not gone to a dentist or afraid of dentist, The reason is
 - a) No clinic nearby b) fear of cost and needles. c) No time d) have visited dentist
11. Can dental treatment change your aesthetic looks?
 - a) No b) Yes
12. Do you think broken tooth or missing tooth can artificially be replaced?
 - a) Yes b) No c) No idea

OBSERVATIONS: (SURVEY RESULTS)

| | |
|--|-------|
| 1. What is your Age? | |
| a) 11-12 | 33.3% |
| b) 13-14 | 33.3% |
| c) 15-16 | 33.3% |
| 2. What will you do if you feel you have a dental problem? | |
| a) Visit a Dentist | 81% |
| b) Look into some website on Internet | 19% |
| 3. If your teeth is not straight | |
| a) They can be corrected | 68% |
| b) They cannot be corrected | 28% |
| c) No Idea | 4% |
| 4. What does a Bleeding gum mean? | |
| a) Healthy gums | 24% |
| b) Unhealthy gums | 68% |
| c) No Idea | 8% |
| 5. How often do you visit the dentist for Treatment or a dental procedure? | |
| a) Regularly every 6 Months | 45% |
| b) Occasionally | 19% |
| c) When I have Pain | 34% |
| d) Never Visited | 2% |
| 6. The Treatment(s) I Sought during my Last Visit to dentist | |
| a) For regular check-up | 55% |
| b) To clean my teeth | 26% |
| c) Any other treatment | 17% |
| d) Not Visited | 2% |
| 7. Do You think Dental treatment is necessary for better body health? | |
| a) Yes | 70% |
| b) No | 22% |
| c) No idea | 8% |
| 8. Are you Aware of the term Implants and why are they used? | |
| a) Yes | 57% |
| b) No | 43% |
| c) No idea | 0% |
| 9. What do you think is the treatment for dental caries or decayed tooth? | |
| a) Extraction | 38% |
| b) Filling | 56% |
| c) Scaling | 6% |
| 10. What do you think Extraction is? | |
| a) Putting a crown for a tooth | 30% |
| b) Pulling out a tooth. | 62% |
| c) Replacing broken tooth | 8% |
| 11. If you have not gone to a dentist or afraid of dentist , The reason is | |
| a)No clinic nearby | 20% |
| b) fear of cost and needles | 41% |
| c) No time | 19% |
| d) have visited dentist | 20% |
| 12. Can dental treatment change your aesthetic looks? | |
| a)No | 70% |
| b) Yes | 30% |
| 13. Do you think broken tooth or missing tooth can artificially be replaced? | |
| a)Yes | 81% |
| b) No | 15% |
| c) No idea | 4% |

RESULTS

In this study about 125 Boys and 125 Girls of a middle school of Chennai participated in this study. Out of the students participated in this study 33.3% of the students where about of age group 11 years to 12 years, 33.3% of the students where about of age group 13years to 14years, 33.3% of the students where about of age group 15years to 16 years. This is the age limit between which children go to middle school. When questions regarding the knowledge about dental procedures were asked through a questionnaire and the following results were obtained. When students were asked whether the teeth which are not aligned properly can be corrected, about 68% replied that they can be corrected while 28% said they cannot be corrected and 4% had no idea about whether it can be corrected or not. When students were asked what does a bleeding gums mean? .Mostly about 68% replied as unhealthy gums while 24% replied as healthy gums and 8% had no idea about the gum bleeding. When asked whether broken tooth or missing can be replaced artificially about 81% said yes and 15%

said no and about 4% didn't have any idea about the situation. When students were asked about what extraction means, 30% replied as putting a crown while 62% replied as pulling out a tooth and 8% replied as replacement of broken tooth. When asked about what could be the treatment for a tooth with dental caries, about 56% replied as filling while 38% replied as extraction and 6% replied as scaling. Finally when asked about the awareness of dental implants, about 57% replied that they were aware while 43% were not aware of dental implants. When questions regarding the attitude towards dental procedures were asked the following results were obtained. When Children had a dental problem, about 81% of the students visited the dentist while 19% of the students were looking onto some internet websites about the problem instead of consulting a dentist. When students were asked how frequently do they visit the dentist, about 45% asked that they visit the dentist regularly every six months while 53% replied that they visited dentist for dental procedures occasionally or when pain arises and 2% have never visited a dentist for a dental procedure.

When asked why they fear for dental procedures, about 41% said that they fear injections and needles while 20% said that no clinics were nearby while 19% had no time to visit a dentist and 20% have visited dentist without any fear. When asked about the last treatment they underwent, about 55% went for a regular check-up while 26% went for scaling and 17% for other treatments and 2% never visited the dentist. When students were asked whether dental health is related to oral health, about 70% replied yes while 22% replied no and 8% had no idea about the relation. Finally when they asked about whether dental treatment and procedure can change their aesthetic looks, 30% said yes while 70% said these treatments cannot change the aesthetic looks of the individual.

DISCUSSIONS

This study represented a broad overview about the awareness and attitude of dental treatments among middle school children between the ages 11 years to 16 years. About 125 boys and girls participated in the study. Nowadays, because of the changing lifestyle trends in the modern world, there has been changing ideas and perception about dental procedures and there is evolving attitude towards these dental treatments¹³. Awareness about the dental procedures and treatments is very necessary in order to prevent the adverse after effects of dental problems after its occurrences.. So awareness of these dental treatments might help in early detection of dental problems. Simultaneously studies about oral health awareness was also taken into account¹⁴. This study was done on middle children as middle school children are more prone to dental problems and this age is the time in which they easily understand the concepts. Some any misconceptions and wrong information about these procedures and treatment can easily be corrected in this age so that their idea about dental treatments can be beneficial information to them. So their attitude towards dentist and dental treatments may also change! Similar studies were conducted on high school children and public and private school children of Jordan¹⁵. Further studies were conducted on high school children about their awareness of these dental treatments in the year 2015². Compared to the older studies done on population of Chennai, questions regarding the awareness of orthodontic treatments, about 79 percent of the study sample had an awareness that it can be corrected while the 12 percent where with an idea that their Malalignment cannot be corrected and the rest 9 percent had no idea of what malalignment of their tooth². But in our current study on middle school children of Chennai, about 68% were aware of the orthodontic therapies while 28% were unaware of the orthodontic therapies and 4% had no idea about the procedure. These orthodontic therapies include the very common procedure of fixed appliances use for correction of malocclusion or crowding of teeth. By this putting forth this question, the awareness of orthodontic procedures was assessed. When enquired about the cause of bleeding in gums, about 6 percent of students said as healthy gums of the students sample, 10 percent of sample assumed it to be the gum recession, while an equal percent of study population had no idea about

what bleeding gum was and other correlated it to be inflamed gum². But in our current study on middle school children, mostly about 68% replied as unhealthy gums while 24% replied as healthy gums and 8% had no idea about the gum bleeding.. By this putting forth this question, the awareness of periodontics procedures where assessed. When suggestion relating to management of fractured tooth where put forth. 45 percent of the subject suggested that the if any tooth accidentally gets broken should end up only in removing, 15 percent suggested that the tooth which is been broken need not be removed and can be artificially be fixed². But in the current study, 81% said yes and 15% said no and about 4% didn't have any idea about the situation. There has been an increased awareness about the fractured tooth and its treatment.. By this putting forth this question, the awareness of surgical procedures where assessed. The awareness that the treatment is essential for decayed tooth was found in among 59 percent, 14 percent were not interested in treatment, while the 27 percent of the student sample generally had no idea about the treatment that exists for the dental decay². While in current study The treatment for dental caries was interrupted to be, about 56% replied as filling while 38% replied as extraction and 6% replied as scaling. By this putting forth this question ,the awareness of endodontic procedures where assessed. Awareness of dental implants were found to be high in older studies 55 percent where aware about the implants, 45 percent where unknown about the treatment known as implants², while similar observations were made in current study about 57% replied that they were aware while 43% were not aware of dental implants. When questions about the attitude where asked to the high school students, the following were the results obtained. In this study , when questions were asked , When they feel they have a dental problem Approximately 60 percent of the study sample visits to the dentist , 20 percent search into the web ,17 percent leave the problem unseen and 3 percent leave the problem uncared until it saturates the seriousness level². But contractedly in our current study on middle school children , When Children had a dental problem, about 81% of the students visited the dentist while 19% of the students were looking onto some internet websites about the problem instead of consulting a dentist The frequency of children visiting the dental clinics where analyzed in which 40 percent of the study sample visited the dentist occasionally, 33 percent visited the dentist only when they have a severe dental pain, 7 percent of the study sample visited regularly in 6-12 months interval, while the rest 20 percent had reported as they have never visited the dentist so far², while in current study ,it was found to be that children have become lethargic and visit the dentist on during time of need. About 45% said that they visit the dentist regularly every six months while 53% replied that they visited dentist for dental procedures occasionally or when pain arises and 2% have never visited a dentist for a dental procedure. When enquired about why they didn't visit dentist or why fear for dentist, was no time for 50 percent of the study sample , for 25 percent the treatment cost was high , 15 percent where with an idea of their eon self-treatment , the rest 10 percent had no dental clinics nearby to their area and they dint feel for an need that Is so essential² similarly in our current

study 41% said that they fear injections and needles while 20% said that no clinics were nearby while 19% had no time to visit a dentist and 20% have visited dentist without any fear. Analyzing the relation of dental health and oral health about 52% said they had a relation while 15 percent had no intentions of correlating the dental health with the body health, the rest 33 percent had no idea about what the dental health can do with the body health², while in current study about 70% replied yes while 22% replied no and 8% had no idea about the relation. When asked whether dental treatments can change their aesthetic looks 87 percent agreed and were aware that the aesthetics of a person can be changed by the dental treatment while 13 percent did not confess with it², while in current study 30% said yes while 70% said these treatments cannot change the aesthetic looks of the individual. Finally it was found that the results were similar to older studies apart from certain results which have aroused due to the changing world and ideas in peoples mind.

CONCLUSION

The Middle school students these days are aware of the basic dental procedures and show a responsible attitude towards these procedures. But there exist a circle of

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students who don't have the basic knowledge about dental treatments and have a lethargic attitude of avoiding these dental treatments even in times of serious illness of the structures present in oral cavity and have the attitude of seeking professional help only after they are adversely affected by the disease in the oral cavity. A nowadays even though technology is developing, the students are not aware of the recent updated modern dental treatments in the field of dentistry which could be very much beneficial to them in the current situation because of the changing lifestyle patterns and eating habits.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESE

Conflict of Interest declared as none.