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Research Article

**ORAL HYGIENE AWARENESS AND PRACTICES AMONG
PATIENTS VISITING THE DEPARTMENT OF
PERIODONTOLOGY AT PUNJAB DENTAL HOSPITAL LAHORE**¹Tallat Mahmooda, ²Asma Aslam, ³Tahira Shaheen¹Head Nurse, Mayo Hospital Lahore²Charge Nurse, Rural Health Centre Morkhunda District Nankana Sahib³Nursing Instructor, Post Graduate College of Nursing Punjab LahoreEmail ID: ushnahamna@gmail.com**Article Received:** July 2021**Accepted:** August 2021**Published:** September 2021**Abstract:**

Objective: This study was aimed to assess the awareness and practices regarding oral hygiene awareness among the patients visiting the department of periodontology at Punjab Dental Hospital, Lahore. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among the patients visiting the department of periodontology at Punjab Dental Hospital Lahore during January 2019 to March 2019 after seeking formal approval from Institutional ethical committee of the Punjab Dental Hospital Lahore. A total of 200 patients were enrolled using a convenient sampling technique and a self-constructed questionnaire was used to record the responses. Data was analyzed by the SPSS version 21 and statistical significance was noticed ($P < 0.005$). **Results:** The results of the study show an acute lack of oral hygiene awareness and limited knowledge of oral hygiene practices as well as effect of poor oral hygiene on systemic health. **Conclusion:** There is an urgent need for comprehensive educational programs to promote good oral hygiene and impart education about correct oral hygiene practices.

Keywords: Awareness, knowledge, practice, oral hygiene, general health, dental health, prevention

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INTRODUCTION:

Oral health problems produce long term influence on the quality of life of an individual [1] Of all the factors the most common are the genetic mutations, developmental anomalies, poor oral hygiene and traumatic injuries. [2] Patients seek and show better concern for maintaining the oral hygiene when encouraged with positive feedback depending on their health belief model. [3] Improving oral health is a joint task between the dentist and the patient. A positive perception is a key factor in maintaining a healthy oral cavity [4]

Past studies have shown that a weak linkage exists between knowledge and practices regarding oral health.[5] According to study conducted in India the people belonging to the rural areas are deficient in their knowledge and practices towards oral health .[6] Similarly the people of urban areas too suffer from the tooth and gum problems due to their unhealthy eating habits.[7] Therefore the present study to assess oral hygiene awareness and practices among patients

visiting the department of periodontology at Punjab Dental Hospital, Lahore.

METHODS:

A cross-sectional study was conducted among the patients visiting the department of periodontology at Punjab Dental Hospital Lahore during January 2019 to March 2019 after seeking formal approval from Institutional ethical committee of the Punjab Dental Hospital Lahore. A total of 200 patients were enrolled using a convenient sampling technique and a self-constructed questionnaire was used to record the responses. Data was analyzed by the SPSS version 21 and statistical significance was noticed ($P < 0.005$). Only new patients having ages 20-60, visiting the hospital having no other comorbidities during the study period and volunteered to participate were included in the study.

For the convenience, the questionnaire was translated into Urdu and Punjabi.

RESULTS:**Table.1 Socio demographic data of the participants**

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Years		
20-29	64	32
30-39	52	26
40-49	44	22
50-59	40	20
Gender		
Male	144	72
Female	56	28
Qualification		
Uneducated	48	24
Primary	72	36
Secondary	44	22
Intermediate	20	10
Bachelors	16	08
Occupation		
Daily Wager	64	32
Private Job	72	36
Government Job	04	02
Unemployed	60	30
Monthly income PKR		
<25,000	92	46
25,000-50000	48	24
>50,000	40	20
Residence		
Urban	108	54
Rural	92	46

62% of the participants were below 25 year of age, 72 % were male, 36% had attained primary level of education, 36% were doing private jobs as a source of income, 46 % had a monthly family income of less than 25,000 PKR and 54 % belonged to the urban population of Lahore. (Table.1)

Items	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Are you cleaning your teeth?		
Yes	152	76
No	48	24
What do use for cleaning your teeth?		
Toothpaste and toothbrush	92	46
Toothbrush and powder	48	24
Miswak	40	20
Mouthwash	14	07
Others	06	03
How often are you cleaning your teeth?		
Once	154	77
Twice	38	19
More than twice	08	04
What technique do you follow for brushing?		
Vertical	48	24
Horizontal	72	36
Mixed	80	40
Do you use something after eating?		
Matchsticks	74	37
Toothpicks	66	33
Floss	24	12
Brush	12	06
Gurgles	24	12
Do you clean your tongue as well?		
Yes	46	23
No	154	77
Does your breath has a bad odor?		
Yes	108	54
No	92	46
Do you smoke?		
Yes	48	24
No	152	76
Is oral health as important as general health?		
Yes	188	94
No	12	06
How often do you see a dentist?		
Every month	06	03
Every three months	14	07
Every 6 Months	48	24
Annually	52	26
Only when the problem occurs	80	40
Do you think is it beneficial to visit dentist every 6 months?		
Yes	156	78
No	44	22

76% of the participants stated that they were cleaning their teeth, 46% used toothbrush and the paste, 77% used to brush their teeth only once, 40% opted the mixed technique for brushing, 37% used matchsticks for cleaning their teeth, 77% said they do not clean their tongues while brushing, 54% felt bad odor from their mouths, 24% were smokers, 94% admitted that oral hygiene is necessary for general wellbeing. 40% stated that they only visit a dentist when it is an acute emergency. 78% agreed to the fact that one should visit the dentist at least every 6 months to rule out any pathology.

DISCUSSION:

The current study has revealed the fact that oral hygiene is taken for granted in all segments of the society. Preventive oral health education is an era of revolution. Numerous oral health programs are underway that have the potential to change the destiny of this issue. Hence in this study we tried to assess the knowledge and practices of the urban and rural population of Pakistan. Our study highlighted that there exists a lack of awareness and practices among local population regarding oral health presenting to the out-patient department of Punjab Medical Hospital, Lahore

According to the demographic data there were more male than females who attended the dental out-patient department which is in contrast to the higher rate of utilization by female patients reported in Helsinki *et al.* [8] Similarly there were more young 72% (20-29 years) and 36% with at least primary level of education patients that have come to avail the dental services which shows that education plays an important role in oral health awareness [Table 1].

Brushing with a toothbrush and a paste was the 46% most commonly used method of teeth cleaning. [Table 2]. Out of which, 77% of the participants were brushing their teeth once a day and 19% twice a day which is very less as compared to United States where the percentage was about 90. [9] In the present study about 37% of the total patients used matchsticks, 33% used toothpicks and 12% used floss an interdental aid which is comparable to the study conducted by in Saudia Arabia. [10]

Bad breath was experienced by 54% of the participants which is in contrast to the study findings of Kumar *et al.* in which 21% of participant experienced bad breath. [11] and general population survey of Japan where 24% of the individuals studied complained about bad breath. [12]. 24% of the respondents were active smokers which added to the bad breath. Tongue cleaning was done by 23% of the patients in our study

which is comparable to the study done by Jain *et al.* in which only 20% of the studied population used to clean their tongue. [13] These simple and routine steps for the maintenance of oral hygiene are not much popular among the population which shows lack of awareness regarding healthy lifestyle because all the food we eat passes through the oral cavity into the stomach and then absorbed into the blood through assimilation via small and large intestine. Thus a dirty mouth can lead to more infections to travel down the body leading to gastroenteritis, infective endocarditis, meningitis, glomerulonephritis and appendicitis etc. Thus the oral health is the index of the whole body health. 94% of the participants knew about the relationship between the oral health and systemic health but their practical approaches were not sufficient to endorse it. Visiting a dentist was linked with the emergence of any acute problem rather than a preventive behavior. [7] 40% of the participants stated that they visited a dentist only in problem and only 24% of them visited the dentist after every 6 months. These results are similar to the study done by Jain *et al.* where 54% of the subjects visited the dentists when they were in pain. [13] These results are homologous to the study conducted by Maryln *et al.* in which 67.9% of the study population reported having had a dental checkup at least once a year in the past 5 years. [9]

CONCLUSION:

Despite the globalization and commercialization of many household and dental care products there is a visible dearth of awareness and practical approach for the maintaining a healthy oral cavity. Many people consider oral health as an optional and aesthetic field but the scientific evidence says that it is the source of many systemic diseases. Therefore there exists a need of comprehensive awareness programs at the grass root levels to instil the benefits, hazards and sense of responsibility among the general population.

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