

## **A survey of mothers to determine the level of oral hygiene practised by children.**

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### **Introduction**

There is no exception to this rule when it comes to health-related behaviours, including oral health. An important part of a child's overall well-being is the state of his or her mouth, teeth, and gums. Caries in the teeth is a common oral health issue that affects nearly everyone. Dental caries is on the rise in many developing countries. There are many diseases of the mouth, but dental caries is among the most serious and common. Cariogenic bacteria and fermentable dietary carbohydrates on the tooth surface interact over time to cause this infectious oral disease, which is easily spread from person to person. Caries affects nearly 90% of children, despite the fact that it can occur in both children and adults. "The presence of one or more decayed, missing (due to caries), or filled tooth surfaces in any primary tooth in a preschool-age child between the ages of birth and 71 months" is what is meant by "early childhood caries."

Preschoolers, in particular, have a hard time grasping the mechanics of proper brushing and the importance of maintaining good oral hygiene. Brushing with a baby toothbrush should begin after a baby's first tooth comes in, according to the American Dental Association (ADA). Sugar consumption should be reduced and a bottle should not be given to the child while it is sleeping. In addition, it is recommended that children have their teeth checked every six months, starting at the age of one. It's the only study of its kind in Kangettumkara, Kerala, looking at how well mothers know about oral health issues in children aged 6 months to 12 years.

A cross-sectional study was conducted at the Kangettumkara village in Kerala, India, from January to April of this year. It was administered a 20-item structured questionnaire. Oral hygiene, brushing, and etiological factors were all included in a single questionnaire used to gauge a mother's knowledge, attitude, and behaviour. For those who could not speak English, the message was translated into Malayalam. Only those participants who agreed to participate were included in the study. The calculated sample size was 100, with a test power of 80% and a significance level of 5%.

Responses from 88 mothers and 12 mothers who refused participation were obtained from the total of 160 questionnaires distributed. The majority of participants had completed their college education and were working as housewives. Evidently, mothers did not consider dental caries to be a contagious disease. Most children brush their own teeth, but 51% of mothers believed that parents were responsible for their children's oral health and hygiene until they were about 6 years old. Most mothers (50 percent) believed that children should only go to the dentist if they were in pain. Only 32% of patients were aware that a six-monthly visit was required. Over half (59%) of mothers admitted to putting sweeteners in their children's milk despite knowing that this can lead to tooth decay. More than half of mothers were aware that they should change their child's toothbrush every three months. Sixty eight percent of mothers were aware of the benefits of brushing their teeth before and after bedtime. Some mothers (32 percent) believe that children should begin brushing their teeth at the age of 3-4 years, while others (22 percent) believe that brushing should begin as soon as the first tooth appears in the oral cavity.

## Discussion

A mother's role in her child's oral and general well-being is critical from the time of conception all the way up to the early years of childhood. Parents must model good oral hygiene habits for their children in order to teach them. Most of the mothers in this study had no idea that caries is a disease that can be spread from one person to another through the sharing of utensils. Johnson et al findings support this conclusion (2010). This study also found that mothers' brushing knowledge was excellent. Parents were aware that children should be brushed after breakfast and before going to sleep. In a separate study, Rajasree et al. observed the same phenomenon (2017). Another study found that mothers' brushing knowledge was woefully lacking. Even though they knew how to brush their children's teeth, many mothers still didn't do it properly. Most mothers were aware that parents are responsible for their child's oral health until the age of seven, but a different study found that most mothers thought their child's teeth needed to be cleaned by them until the age of seven. Mothers were found to be unaware of the importance of visiting a dentist, according to the findings of the study. In the mothers' minds, dentist visits should be limited to emergencies. Rani thampi et al. made similar findings in their study, as did other researchers (2012)

Moreover, mothers were shown to be aware of the dangers of nighttime and extended-duration bottle feeding, according to the results of the research. A

similar study found that 79 percent of mothers were aware of the detrimental effects of prolonged bottle-feeding on their children.

Furthermore, Mangalya et al. (2012) found that mothers who were educated were aware of the negative effects of prolonged bottle feeding on oral health, whereas those who were not educated were unaware.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that most mothers are aware of children's oral hygiene practises, but attitudes and practises, which were found to be inadequate, need to reflect this.

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