



Periodontal Health Awareness Among the Patients Visiting the Dental OPD

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Corresponding Author:** Sabeen Masood, Department of Dentistry, Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine, Pakistan.**DOI:** 10.31080/ASDS.2020.04.0783**Received:** January 09, 2020**Published:** February 13, 2020© All rights are reserved by **Sabeen Masood., et al.*Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the awareness of periodontal health among the patients visiting dental OPDs of Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine Karachi. This survey was conducted from September, 2019 to November, 2019. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted on 100 patients. A structured questionnaire was administered through convenience sampling to patients. The results of the questionnaire were calculated and analyzed via the SPSS software version 20.

Keywords: Oral Health; Oral Hygiene; Periodontal Health**Introduction**

Periodontal health depends on the maintenance of the periodontium which includes gingiva, periodontal ligament, cementum, and alveolar bone [1]. Periodontal disease that adversely affects one of these components, has been a leading concern in our part of the continent [2]. Oral health plays a pivotal role in ensuring sound mental and physical health of an individual [3]. The association between one's general health with that of his oral health cannot be ignored as the oral cavity is a reflection of general health [4]. For instance, various studies were undertaken to prove a bidirectional relationship between periodontal disease and diabetes [5]. There is abundant evidence indicating the correlation between oral health and lack of awareness amongst the people coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds [6]. In a third-world country like Pakistan, the majority of the population is completely oblivious to the different measures of oral health maintenance and harbor destructive habits like betel nut chewing. Their negligence often accounting for premature tooth loss, gingival bleeding, swelling, pain, food impaction and general discomfort amongst the masses irrespective of their age, gender or economic status.

Periodontal disease progresses after accumulation of plaque, which is a biofilm that contains microorganisms, and the subsequent lack of physical removal of the plaque resulting in calculus, hardened plaque [7]. This leads to the development of periodontal deterioration in the presence of decreased host resistance and lack of preventive measures such as self-care and frequent dental visits.

This study was initiated with the aim to determine the knowledge and inclination of the patients coming into the out-patient department towards the maintenance and treatment of their periodontal concerns.

Methodology

This is a professional OPD (out-patient department) based survey, conducted from September, 2019-November, 2019 to assess the awareness and perception about periodontal health among the patients visiting the Dental OPD. A sample size of 100 using self-administered structure questionnaires was collected for this survey, while the analysis was made using SPSS version 20. This questionnaire consisted of 22 questions altogether. The questions were based along three themes. First part of the questionnaire was based on patient's current oral hygiene habits like brushing techniques, frequency of brushing, toothpaste used, type of brush used (soft, medium, hard) and how often do they replace their brush. The second part of the survey was based on questions regarding periodontal issues and the presenting symptoms like sensitivity, halitosis, bleeding gums, recession, teeth mobility and causes of staining and their correlation with comorbid and para-functional habits. The last part mainly assessed patient's understanding about oral health and hygiene and how do they maintain it in their daily life. Questions like, visits to the dentist and any prior dental treatments, perception about scaling and myths associated with it, were included.

Results

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed among the patients visiting the Dental OPD. Each survey form consisted of 22 questions. The respondents included 70% of people belonging to low socio-economic backgrounds and the remaining 30% belonging to relatively higher and well-informed economic backgrounds. A general question about the mode of maintaining oral hygiene and cleaning teeth was asked, to which 84% responded that they used tooth brush and a tooth paste, 8% used toothbrush and an abrasive powder while 4% used a finger to apply toothpaste on their teeth and rinse it and the other 4% used miswak (branch of a tree). All candidates were found to brush their teeth, however only 70% brushed twice daily while the other 30% preferred brushing only once daily. The duration of brushing was another question in the form, patients brushing for more than a minute were 59%, 26% brushed for less than 1 minute and the remaining 15% brushed for exactly one minute. Participants who changed their tooth brushes every three months were 49%, every six months 36% and annually were 25%. 50% of the patients used horizontal brushing technique, 26% favored vertical brushing technique and only 8% of the patients were aware about the round brushing technique while the remaining 16% were unaware of either of the brushing techniques. When asked about the usage of dental floss 28% claimed to use it, 42% refused to use it at all, 14% were not regular with it and the other 16% had no prior knowledge about it. Subjects were also inquired about the use of mouthwash to which 36% of them responded with a positive response and the same percentage refused. Questions about periodontal health and perception about oral hygiene maintenance procedures were also included. 67% of the patients visiting the OPD have sensitivity issues. When asked about the causes of bad breath 46% said that it was due to poor oral hygiene, 38% said that it was due to food with strong odour and 16% credited smoking for it. Patients also came in with the complain of bleeding gums and 43% believed it was due to poor oral hygiene, 18% thought it was due to trauma to the gums while 30% were not aware of the cause. Questions about the causes of receding gums and teeth mobility were also included in the questionnaire, 48% thought that gum recession was due to poor oral hygiene while 30% said it was due to aggressive brushing. Tooth mobility was attributed to old age by 54% of the patients and 34% said that getting dental treatment caused mobility of teeth. Patients were also asked about staining of the teeth and 40% identified pan/gutka to be associated with it, 26% said it was due to tea and coffee consumption, 17% said it was due to medications while the remaining thought it was because of smoking and soft drinks.

Participants were also enquired about the impact of periodontal diseases on the general health of patients, 48% agreed between the correlation, 30% were unsure and the remaining were unaware.

Around 52% of the patients said that they were unaware about how often should one go see a dentist, only 22% chose the option a dental visit should be made every six months. In the end a few questions were asked about the patient's perception about scaling and root planning, when were they first advised a scaling procedure and any other methods used for plaque and calculus control. Majority of them were advised scaling as part of their ongoing dental treatment (orthodontic treatment). 36% of the patients said they did not perform any other procedure apart from brushing to control plaque and calculus while another 36% said they used a mouthwash. Not surprisingly 22% of the participants thought that scaling causes loosening of teeth, 12% said it destroys the tooth structure by chipping it off, 10% thought it creates spaces between the teeth and 8% said it causes bleeding of gums. Hence, only 24% of the people acknowledged the importance of scaling as part of dental treatments while 40% said it has negligible role to play.

Discussion

It has been observed that periodontal health has mostly remained as an ignored and unrealized major social problem. Other than the treatment perspective, prevention of the disease has been under the spotlight from previous 20 years which is linked to the degree of awareness among the subjects [8].

There has been an evidence of better periodontal status related to higher socioeconomic grade, [9] which is further supported by the report of Newman., *et al* [10].

Criteria of oral hygiene awareness and maintenance are very imprudent in Pakistan, with majority of population being afflicted due to poor socio-economic behavior and mostly of the people have never paid a visit to a dentist. One should also instill the importance of visiting a dentist on regular basis. In doing so we will be able to better defend our population against various systemic diseases initiated by poor oral hygiene. The present study provides information about the periodontal health awareness among the professionals belonging to different colleges in Karachi Pakistan [11].

A study concludes that there were significant differences in oral health knowledge regarding periodontal disease between students from different levels of studies and different disciplines [12].

A recent survey suggests about awareness of periodontal health among the students of professional colleges in Dakshina Kannada District. A substantial lack of oral hygiene understanding and limited knowledge of oral hygiene practices even in health professionals and engineering and business students [13].

Poor oral health awareness is the cause of increasing the prevalence of periodontal diseases, financial consequences, and harmful effect on the quality of life of the affected individuals [14].

There are some limitations to the study because of limited resources like time and money. The results of this survey are only based on questionnaires as this data collection instrument is more time and cost effective.

Conclusion

The results obtained at the end of our survey sadly paint an alarming picture which indicate lack of awareness of oral hygiene maintenance amongst the local population visiting the dental OPD. These findings prove the importance of immediate effective measures that need to be undertaken in order to counteract the current situation. Educational awareness programs need to be initiated at community levels which require selfless contribution from local dentists for the greater good of the province. At the same time free counselling sessions should be started at all the dental hospitals and schools emphasizing on the maintenance of oral health and the repercussions of poor periodontal health.

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