

Knowledge, Attitude & Practice of Parents about Child Oral Health in Jodhpur City: A Questionnaire Survey

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Oral health is an important aspect of general health in infants and children and impacts the quality of life and health outcomes. The aim of the study was to assess the child oral health knowledge, attitude and practices in Jodhpur city, Rajasthan, India. **Materials and method:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in Jodhpur city, Rajasthan. A self-administered questionnaire was designed for parents/ caretakers having children's aged below 10 yrs of age. **Results:** The knowledge of parents / caretakers regarding oral health of child was found to be good but the knowledge about oral hygiene was not translated when it comes to practicing oral health measures in daily life of the child by their parents/ caretakers. **Conclusion:** It is very necessary to promote regular oral health promotion education programs, with stress on dietary practices and other preventive measures among parents/ caretakers.

KEYWORDS: Attitude, caretakers, child oral health, knowledge, oral health promotion, practice, parents.

INTRODUCTION

Oral health is an important aspect of general health in infants and children and impacts the quality of life and health outcomes. It is an integral component of preschool health and well-being.¹ Maintenance of child's oral hygiene practice mainly affects parents' awareness about oral hygiene measures.

A common misconception that milk teeth of children will exfoliate and there is a less need to seek expert dental advice may lead to various dental problems.² Parents knowledge affects their behaviour towards maintaining oral hygiene practice. However, only a weak relation exists between knowledge and behavior. There are reports that there is an association between increased knowledge and better oral health.³ It is the primary concern of oral health educators to impart a positive oral health knowledge and behaviour among people.⁴

Hence, this study was taken up with the objective of assessing the child oral health knowledge, attitude and practices in Jodhpur city, Rajasthan, India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- **Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in Jodhpur city, Rajasthan. Study Population: - A total of 100 adults were interviewed.
- **Data collection:** For children's aged below 10 yrs a questionnaire was designed for their parents/caretakers.

- The questionnaire contained questions regarding the knowledge of oral health and attitude, oral health practices. The parents received a full explanation of how to fill in the questionnaire.
- The questionnaire was in two languages in Hindi and English for parents/ caretakers to understand it clearly.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the knowledge of parents / caretakers. Most of them had good knowledge of about role of fluoride and tooth brushing in caries development and that sugar containing food products affects oral health. 81% parents who believed that caries are caused by sugar containing food products. 86% of parents/ caretakers responded as yes when they were asked that is cleaning baby's teeth important for oral health.

Table 2 shows the parents/caretakers attitude towards child oral health. 14% respondents agreed that tooth decay is caused by bacteria transmitted by sharing utensils, while 70% thought that nighttime and bottle feeding/breast feeding did not cause tooth decay. About 17% agreed that swallowing of toothpaste can be harmful to a child's health.

Table 3 shows the responses to oral health practices. . 56% respondents agreed that they clean their child's teeth once in a day. 54% agreed that very less often they examine child's teeth.

How to cite this article:

Singhal K, Prasanth M.A, Singh V, Choudhary R. Knowledge, Attitude & Practice of Parents about Child Oral Health in Jodhpur City: A Questionnaire Survey. Int J Dent Med Res 2015;1(6):37-41.

Questions	Frequency of Responses (Percentage)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Is dental caries caused by sugar containing food products?	81%	15%	4%
Is brushing of babies teeth important for oral health?	86%	12%	2%
Is there a need of cleaning baby's teeth every time after feeding?	28%	46%	26%
Does fluoride tooth paste important for prevention of dental caries?	63%	37%	
Is it necessary to fill the decayed baby's teeth?	23%	67%	10%

Table 1:- Knowledge of parents / caretakers about child oral health

Questions	Frequency of Responses (Percentage)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Tooth decay is caused by bacteria that are transmitted by sharing feeding utensils	14%	77%	9%
A balance diet is essential for the healthy growth of baby teeth?	91%	6%	3%
Frequency and prolonged breast / bottle feeding can cause tooth decay?	26%	70%	4%
Swallowing of toothpaste can be harmful to a child's health?	17%	73%	10%

Table 2 :- Attitude of the parents / caretakers about child oral health

Questions	Frequency of Responses (Percentage)			
How often do you give sweet food to the children in a day?	1-2 times 77%	3-4 times 12%	<4 times 2%	doesn't give 9%
How often do you clean a child's teeth?	Once 56%	2 times 42%	every time after feeding 2%	Never 0%
How much tooth paste do you use to brush child's teeth?	Smear layer 44%	Pea size 29%	Full Brush Length 27%	
How often did you do mouth examination of the child?	Less often 54%	More often 33%	Occasionally 9%	Never 4%
Do you take the effort to improve your dental health knowledge?	Yes 71%	No 29%		

Table 3:- Practices of the parents / caretakers about child oral health

DISCUSSION

The results of this cross-sectional study on children oral health provide a unique opportunity to analyses the knowledge, attitude and practices of parents.

Knowledge of parents / caretakers about child oral health

In the present study, it was revealed that there were 81% subjects believed that caries are caused by sugar containing food products where as 15 % did not agree with this fact & 4% did not knew about it [Fig 1]. A similar study conducted by Mani SA et al showed results that 97% of the caretakers knew that sugary food can cause tooth decay.⁵ When parents/ caretakers were asked that is cleaning baby's teeth important for oral health 86% responded as yes, 12% as no and 2% did not knew whereas in a similar study done by Vinay S et al only 78% of the subjects believed so⁶ whereas study carried

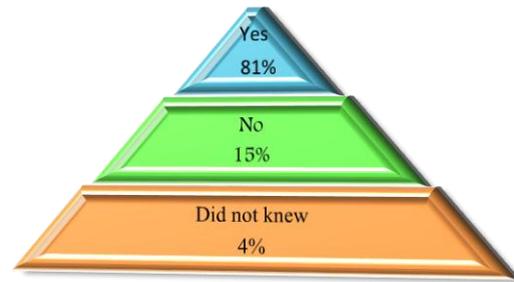


Fig 1:- Is dental caries caused by sugar containing food products?

out by Reddy P et al 93.3% subjects said yes and these findings give the awareness of the subjects regarding the oral condition of the child.⁷ Is there a need of cleaning baby's teeth every time after feeding, 28% answered yes 46% no and 26% did not knew [Fig 2]. When they were asked that is there a need of cleaning baby's teeth every time after feeding 28% answered yes , 46% as no, 26% did not knew [Fig 3]. When they were asked that is fluoride tooth paste important for prevention of dental caries 63% reported as yes and 37% as no [Fig 4]. A

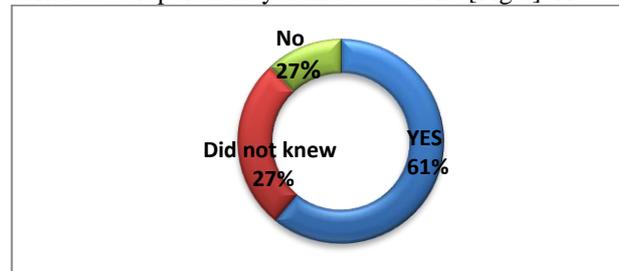


Fig 2:- Is brushing of babies teeth important for oral health?

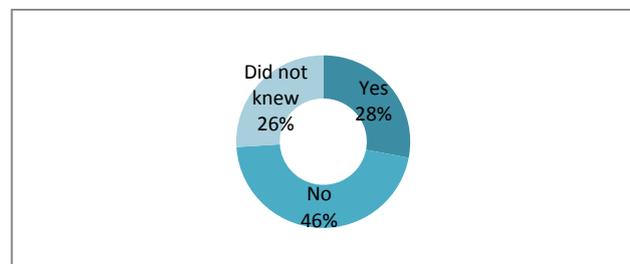


Fig 3:- Is there a need of cleaning baby's teeth every time after feeding?

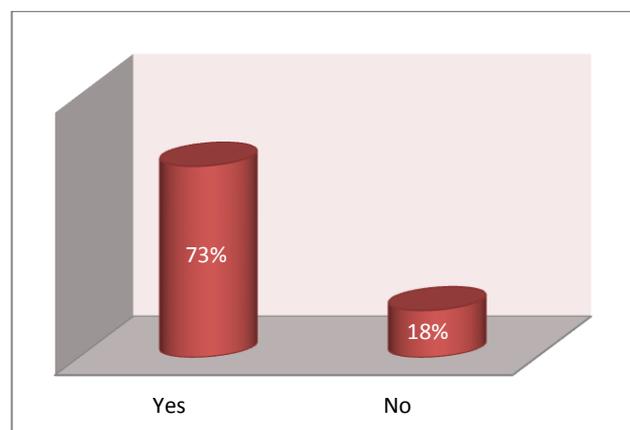


Fig 4:- Does fluoride tooth paste important for prevention of dental caries?

study carried out by Reddy P et al showed that the knowledge regarding role of fluoride was poor.⁷ When the subjects were asked that is it necessary to fill the decayed baby's teeth 23% responded yes, 67% no and 10% did not knew [Fig 5, Table 1]. These results were in agreement with the study carried out by Mani SA et al in which about 62% of the caretakers in this study agreed that it was not necessary to do fillings in deciduous teeth.

Attitude of the parents / caretakers about child oral health

To evaluate their attitude toward child oral hygiene when they were asked that is tooth decay caused by bacteria that are transmitted by sharing feeding utensils 14% answered yes , 77% as no and 9% did not knew [Fig 6]. This was in accordance with the study conducted by Mani SA et al in which only 15% agreed that tooth decay was caused by bacteria that were transmitted by sharing feeding utensils (e.g., spoon).⁵ Hence, this implicates that oral health education should address concepts of transmissibility of oral bacteria. 91% subjects agreed that a balance diet is essential for the healthy growth of baby teeth where as 6% said no and 3% did not knew that balance diet affects growth of baby teeth or not [Fig 7]. 70% of parents/ caretakers disagreed that the frequency and prolonged breast / bottle feeding can cause tooth decay where as 26% responded as yes and 4% did not knew [Fig 8]. In a study carried out by Mani SA et al 56% subjects disagreed that dental caries is caused by frequent/prolonged feeding and nighttime feeding, respectively.⁵ This might be because they were not aware of the hidden sugars in the milk, or that giving the children bottle or breast feed immediately prior to bedtime and when the child woke up in the night was a common cultural practice of the region. 17 % subjects believed that swallowing of toothpaste can be harmful to a child's health where as 73% did not and 10% did not knew [Fig 9]. When they were asked that is it important for a child to visit the dentist before 2 years old 38% said yes 56% as no and 6% did not knew [Fig 10, Table 2]. In a similar study 74.7% of the study carried out by Reddy P et al subjects did not know that a child should be consulted /taken to a dentist before one yr of age.⁷

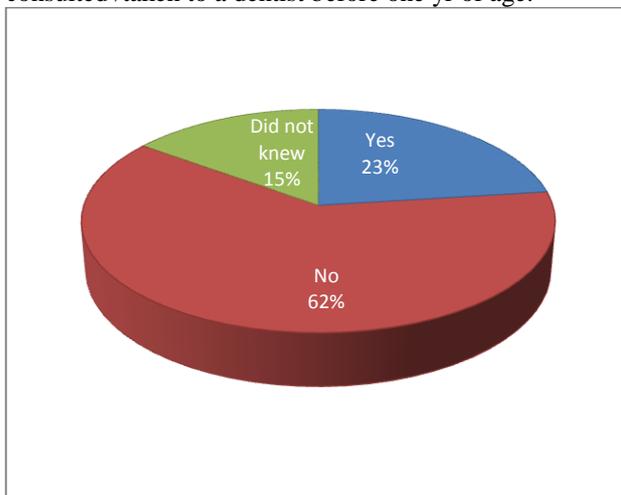


Fig 5:- Is it necessary to fill the decayed baby's teeth?

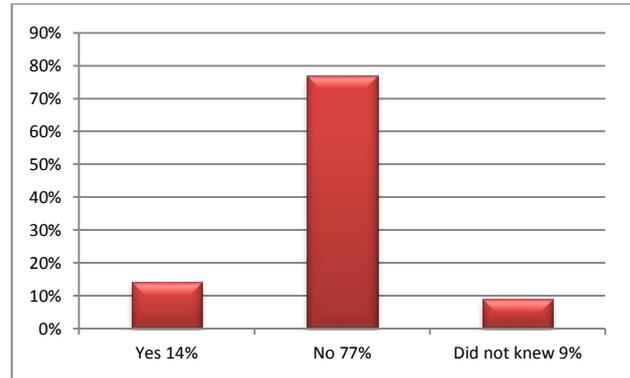


Fig 6:- Tooth decay is caused by bacteria that are transmitted by sharing feeding utensils

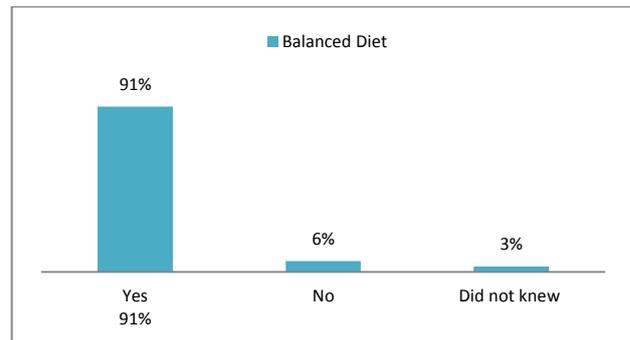


Fig 7:- A balance diet is essential for the healthy growth of baby teeth?

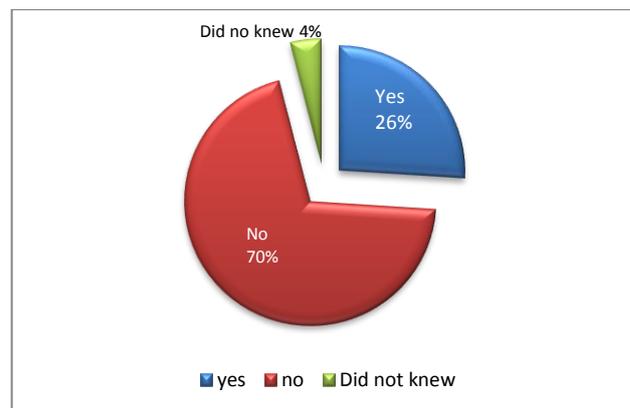


Fig 8:- Frequency and prolonged breast / bottle feeding can cause tooth decay?

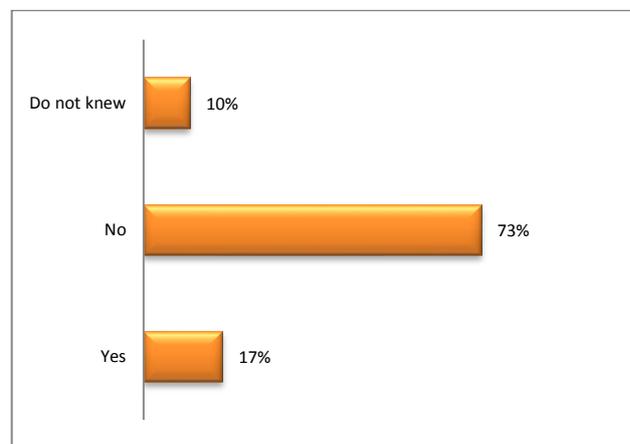


Fig 9:- Swallowing of toothpaste can be harmful to a child's health?

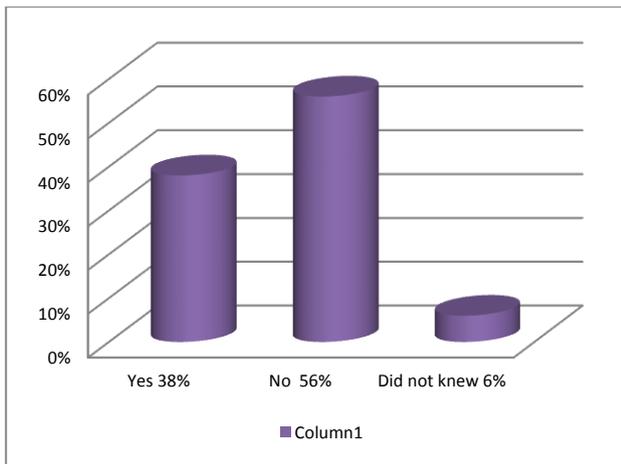


Fig 10:- Is it important for a child to visit the dentist before 2 years old?

Practices of the parents / caretakers about child oral health

When the adults were asked that how often do you give sweet food to the children in a day 77% answered 1-2 times, 12% 3-4 times 2% more than 4 times and 9% doesn't give sweet food to their children's [Fig 11]. When the subjects were asked that how often they clean their child's teeth 56% said once, 42% 2 times, 2% every time after feeding and 0% never [Fig 12]. When they were

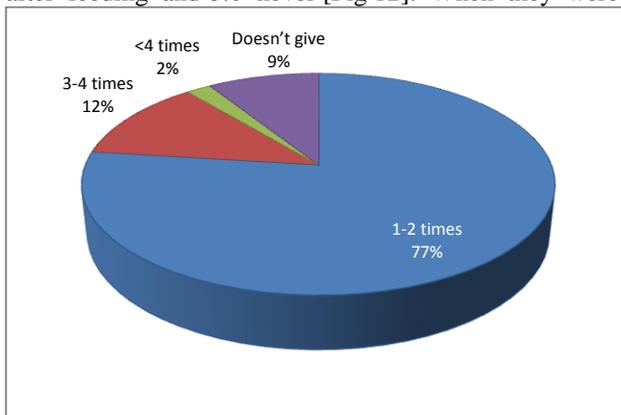


Fig 11:- How often do you give sweet food to the children in a day?

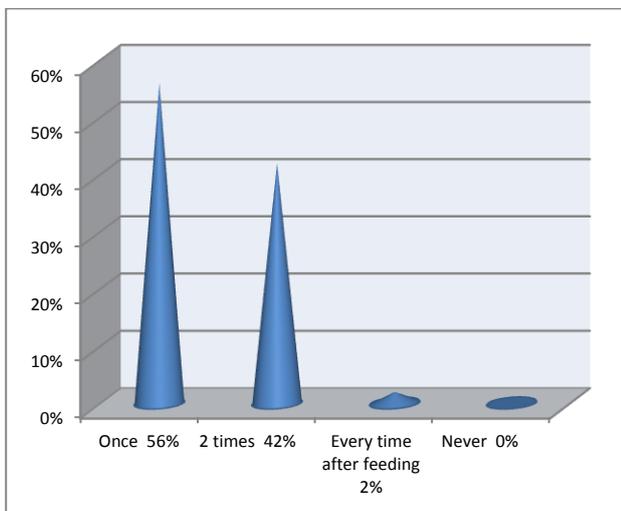


Fig 12:- How often do you clean a child's teeth?

asked how much tooth paste do you use to brush child's teeth 44% reported smear layer, 29% pea sized and 27% full brush length [Fig 13]. When they were interviewed that how often do they do mouth examination of the child 54% agreed that very less often they examine child's teeth 33% answered more often 9% occasionally and 4% never examined their child's mouth [Fig 14]. When they were questioned that do you take the effort to improve your dental health knowledge 71% answered yes and 29% no [Fig 15, Table 3].

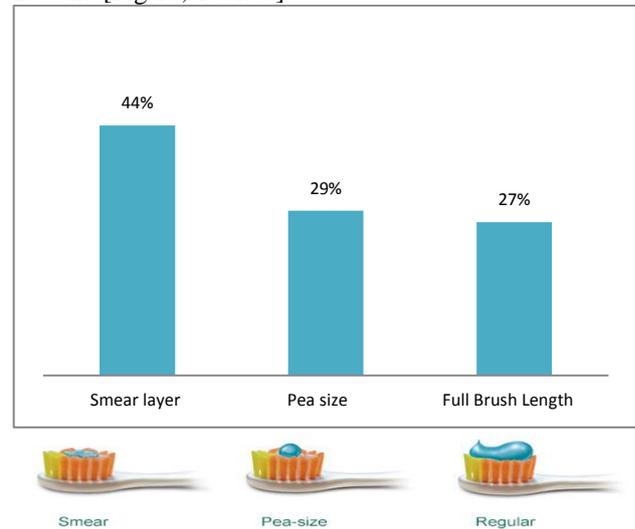


Fig 13:- How much tooth paste do you use to brush child's teeth?

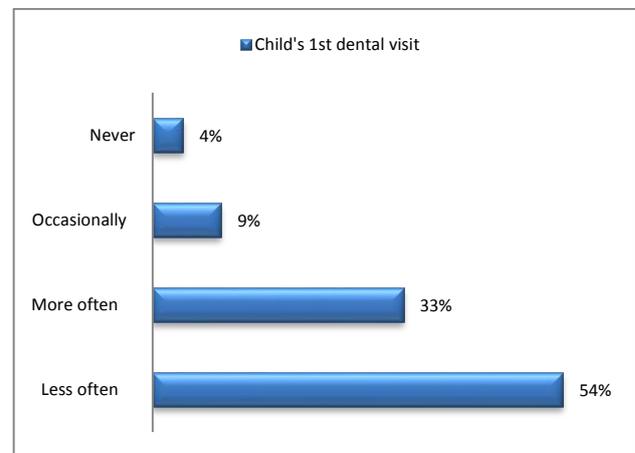


Fig 14:- How often did you do mouth examination of the child?

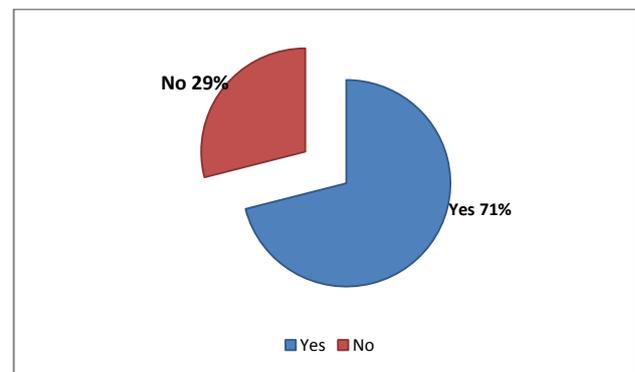


Fig 15:- Do you take the effort to improve your dental health knowledge?

CONCLUSION

Most of parents/ caretakers they had good knowledge about oral hygiene of children's, but the same knowledge did not seem to reflect in their attitude and practice. It is very necessary to promote regular oral health promotion education programs, with stress on dietary practices and other preventive measures among parents/ caretakers.

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Source of Support: Nil
Conflict of Interest: Nil