

## Oral Health Awareness Among Parents Visiting A Dental College In Chennai

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#### Abstract

Dental Services Can Be Defined As An Annual Number Of Dental Visits Per Person Or The Proportion Of A Person's Visit To A Dentist Within A Year. The Given Information Will Help In Planning And Implementing The Oral Health Care Services In A Given Community Area. The Aim Of This Study Was To Assess Oral Health Awareness Among Parents Of Pediatric Outpatients

#### Materials And Method

This Cross-Sectional Study Was Conducted Among The Parents Of Pediatric Outpatients. It Was A Questionnaire Based Study. The Survey Was Conducted Among 100 Parents. Data Was Entered And Analyzed Using Spss. The Results Were Tabulated In The Form Of Pie Charts And Associative Graphs. Descriptive Statistics And Chi Square Test Were Done To Analyse The Collected Data.

#### Result

About 95% Of Respondents Have Visited The Dentist Recently And The Rest Haven't. About 93 % Of The Respondents Have Rated Their Child's Oral Health To Be Excellent And The Rest Have Rated It To Be Very Good. About 73% Of The Participants Responded That Bacteria Can Cause Dental Caries. Female Study Participants Were More Aware About The Role Of Bacteria In Dental Caries Causation When Compared With Male Study Participants (P Value - 0.03). About 70% Of The Participants Responded That There Is No Need To Treat Primary Teeth. Study Participants In The Age Group Of 36-55 Yrs Were More Aware About The Importance Of Primary Teeth When Compared With Participants In Other Age Groups ( P Value - 0.000).

#### Conclusion

Dental Care Services Utilization Of Children Was Good. Awareness About Oral Health Was Poor Among The Study Participants, However Awareness Was High Among Educated Parents When Compared With Uneducated Parents And Participants In The Age Group Of 36-55 Yrs.

#### Keywords

Dental Care Services, Barriers, Children, Innovative Analysis, Oral Health

#### Introduction

Health Has Been Considered As A Basic Human Right And It Is Also A Wider Social Goal. Oral Health Is Critical But An Overload Component Of Overall Health And Well-Being Among The Children. According To Who (World Health Organisation), Oral Health Does Not Mean Just Good Teeth. (1) It Is The State Of Being Free From Chronic Mouth Pain, Facial Pain, Throat Cancer, Oral Sores, Birth Defects Such As Cleft Palate, Cleft Lip, Periodontal Disease, Tooth Decay, Tooth Loss, Other Diseases And Disorders That Affect The Health Of Oral Cavity.(1)

Dental Diseases Are Generally Not Self-Limiting. If Untreated, Dental Conditions May Affect The Person's Well-Being And Overall Quality Of Life. Regular Home And Overall Quality Of Life. Regular Home Oral Care And A Yearly Health Checkup Means Saving One's Own Teeth.(2) Dental Services Can Be Defined As An Annual Number Of Dental Visits Per Person Or The Proportion Of A Person's Visit To A Dentist Within A Year. It Is Reported That The First Dental Visit Within A Series Of Visits Or Lack Of Dental Visits Within A Specific Period Or Aggregate Expenditures For Dental Visits Within A Specific Period Or Emergency Care Versus The Actual Routine.(2)

The Given Information Will Help In Planning And Implementing The Oral Health Care Services In A Given Community Area. Oral Health Is A Fundamental Component Of Overall Health. All The Children And Youth Should Access Preventive Measures And Treatment Based Dental Care.(2) In General, Children Continue To Have A High Rate Of Dental Diseases And This Burden Of Illness Is Disproportionately Represented By The Children Of Lower Socioeconomic Status.

Cavities Or Tooth Decay Are One Of The Most Common Chronic Diseases Of Childhood. Cavities Or Tooth Decays Can Be Prevented. Daily Usage Of Fluoride Containing Toothpaste Plays A Major Role In The Prevention Of Cavities Or Tooth Decays. Children Living In Communities With Fluoridated Tap Water Have Fewer Cavities Than Children Whose Water Is Not Fluoridated. Dental Sealants Also Play An Important Role In The Prevention Of Cavities. Sound Evidence Has Been Collected That Preventive Dental Visits Improve Oral Health And Reduce Later Costs, Good Evidence That Fluoridation Therapy Decreases The Rate Of Dental Caries, Particularly In High-Rise Populations.

Paediatricians And Family Physicians Play An Important Role In Identifying Children At High Risk For Dental Disease And In Advocating For More Comprehensive And Universal Dental Care For Children.(2) The Primary Health Centers And Community Health Centers (Chcs) Offer An Opportunity For Early Diagnosis And Treatment, Dental Health Education, And Institution Of Preventive Measures In Remote Areas.(3)

One Way Of Maintaining Oral Health Status Is By Making Regular Dental Visits To Health Care Centers To Reinforce Preventive Oral Health Habits, And To Ensure Prompt Diagnosis And Management Of Dental Anomalies. Patients With Regular Dental Visits Are More Prone To Have Oral Diseases Detected In The Earlier Stages And Obtain Oral Health Care As Needed.(4) People Who Do Not Undergo Regular Dental Services Or A Delay In Accessing Such Services Can Result In Delayed Diagnosis Leading To Untreated Oral Diseases And Conditions Which In Turn Can Affect The General Health Status Of A Person Compromising On Their Quality Of Life.(5) This Research Is Mainly Done To Spread Awareness On The Assessment Of Dental Services Among Children. Our Team Has Extensive Knowledge And Research Experience That Has Translated Into High Quality Publications(6–14),(15),(16),(17,18),(19),(20),(21–25). Aim Of The Study Is To Assess Oral Health Awareness Among Parents Of Pediatric Outpatients

## **Materials And Method**

This Cross-Sectional Study Was Conducted Among The Parents Of The Children Who Visited A Private Dental College In Chennai. The Survey Was Conducted Among 100 Parents. Questionnaire Had Demographic Details Like Age, Gender And Education Of The Respondent And The Questions Were Also Asked Based On The Oral Practice Of The Children. A Convenient Sampling Method Was Followed. The Source Of Data Was Primary In Nature And It Was Obtained Through Self-Administered Questionnaire. The Questionnaire Survey Was Conducted During The Month Of February, 2021. Data Was Entered And Analyzed Using A Software Program Called Spss Statistics Version 23. An Interviewer Administered A Questionnaire Prepared In The English Language That Was Used To Collect Data About The Parent's And Children's Sociodemographic Characteristics, Dental Visit History, And Reasons For Not Getting A Routine Checkup From A Dentist. From The Questionnaire, The Demographic Details Such As Age Of The Parent, Gender Of The Parent, Education Qualification Of The Parent And The Relationship Of The Responder With The Child. The Statistical Software, Namely Spss Version 23.0, Was Used For The Analysis Of The Data. Qualitative Values Were Compared Using Chi Square And Descriptive Statistics Were Used To Analyse The Data. The P-Value Of 0.05 Or Less Was Considered Statistically Significant.

## **Results**

About 100 Responses Were Obtained From The Given Questionnaire. About 72 (72%) Respondents Belong To The Age Group Of 18-35 Whereas 25 (25%) Respondents Belonged To The Age Group Of 35-55 And The Rest Of 3 (3%) Respondents Belonged To The Age Group Of 55 And Above. About 77 (77%) Respondents Are Males Whereas The Rest Of 23 (23%) Respondents Were Females. All The 100 Respondents (100%) Were Undergraduates. About 75 (75%) Respondents Were Fathers Of The Children Whereas About 15 (15%) Respondents Were Mothers Of The Children, About 8 (8%) Were Guardians Of The Children And The Rest Of 2 (2%) Were Grandparents Of The Children. About 49 (49%) Respondents Have Said That Their Child Consume Desserts And Candies Everyday Whereas 25 (25%) Respondents Have Said That Their Child Consume Desserts And Candies 2 Times A Week, About 23 (23%) Respondents Have Said That Their Child Consume Desserts And Candies 2-6 Times A Week And The Rest Of 3 (3%) Respondents Have Said That Their Child Consumes Desserts And Candies Every Week.

All The 100 Respondents (100%) Have Confirmed That Their Child Brushes Their Teeth Everyday. About 83 (83%) Respondents Have Said That Their Child Had Started Brushing Their Teeth 6 Months After Birth Whereas The Rest Of 17 (17%) Have Said That Their Child Has Started To Brush Their Teeth During The Age Span Of 1-3 Years. All The 100 Respondents (100%) Have Confirmed That Their Child Brushes Their Teeth Using Toothpaste. About 92% Of The Study Participants Reported That Gingival Bleeding During Brushing Is Normal (Figure 1). About 96 (96%) Respondents Have Said That Their Child Uses Fluoride Toothpaste While Brushing Their Teeth. About 73% Of The Participants Responded That Bacteria Can Cause Dental Caries (Figure 2). About 70 % Of The Participants Responded That There Is No Need To Treat Primary Teeth (Figure 3). About 68 (68%) Respondents Have Said That Their Children Had Tooth Discomfort Occasionally In The Last 12 Months, Whereas The Rest Of 32 (32%) Of Respondents Have Said That Their Child Never Had Any Tooth Discomfort In The Last 12 Months. About 95 (95%) Respondents Have Visited The Dentist Recently And The Rest Haven't. About 93 (93%) Of The Respondents Have Rated Their Child's Oral Health To Be Excellent And The Rest Have Rated It To Be Very Good. Majority Of The Study Participants Reported That Their Child Has Had Toothache Or Discomfort In The Last 12 Months

Occasionally. Majority Of The Study Participants Reported That They Use Fluoride Toothpaste To Brush Their Child's Teeth. About 94 % Of The Participants Were Unaware Of The Importance Of Fluoride In Teeth Protection (Figure 4).

Majority Of The Study Participants Reported That Their Child's Oral Health Is Very Good. Majority Of The Study Participants Agree With The Statement, 'Oral Health Is Important To Our Life'. Female Study Participants Were More Aware About The Role Of Bacteria In Dental Caries Causation When Compared With Male Study Participants (Figure 5). Study Participants In The Age Group Of 36-55 Yrs Were More Aware About The Fact That Bleeding During Brushing Is Not Normal When Compared With Participants In Other Age Groups And Also About The Importance Of Primary Teeth When Compared With Participants In Other Age Groups (Figure 6 And 7).

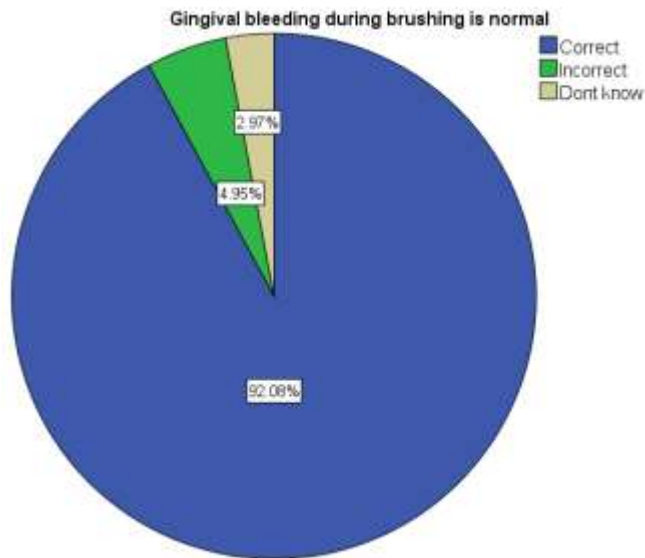


Figure 1: Pie Chart Showing The Responses Of The Participants For The Statement, 'Gingival Bleeding During Brushing Is Normal'. About 92 % Of The Participants Responded That The Statement Was Correct Suggesting The Awareness About Gingival Bleeding Was Low Among Most Of The Participants.

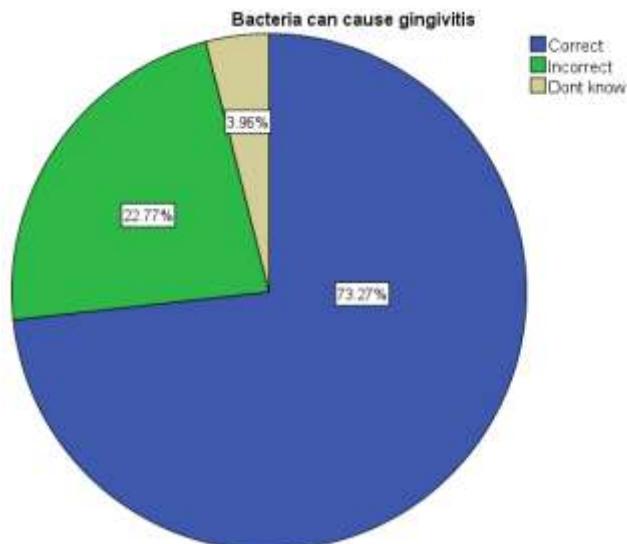


Figure 2: Pie Chart Showing The Responses Of The Participants For The Statement, 'Bacteria Can Cause Dental Caries'. About 73 % Of The Participants Responded That The Statement Was Correct, Suggesting That Most Of The Participants Were Aware Of The Role Of Bacteria In Dental Caries.

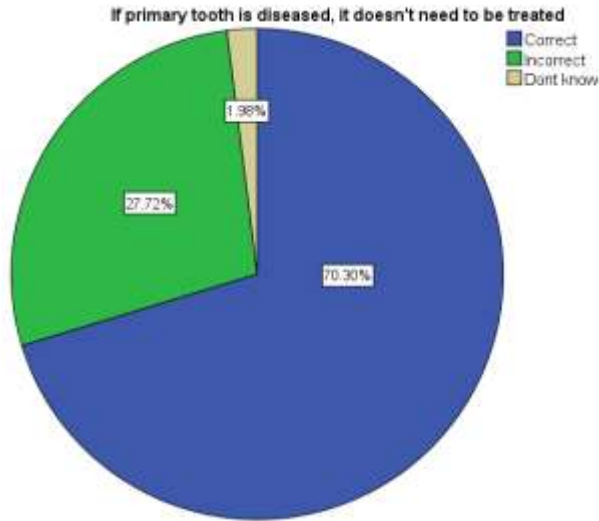


Figure 3: Pie Chart Showing The Responses Of The Participants For The Statement, 'If Primary Teeth Is Diseased It Doesnt Need To Be Treated. About 70 % Of The Participants Responded That The Statement Was Correct, Suggesting That Most Of The Participants Were Unaware Of The Importance Of Primary Teeth.

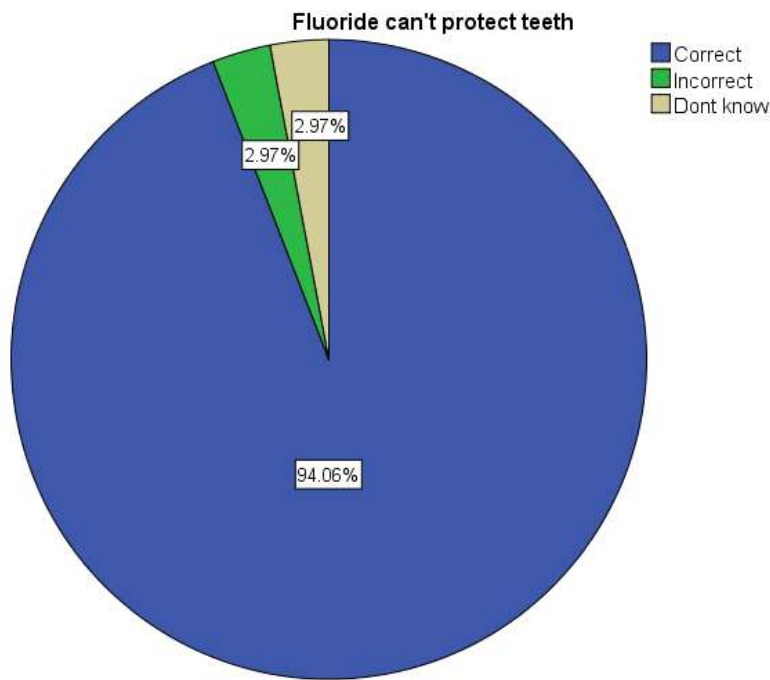


Figure 4: Pie Chart Showing The Responses Of The Participants For The Statement, 'Fluoride Can't Protect The Teeth'. About 94 % Of The Participants Responded That The Statement Was Correct, Suggesting That Most Of The Participants Were Unaware Of The Importance Of Fluoride In Teeth Protection.

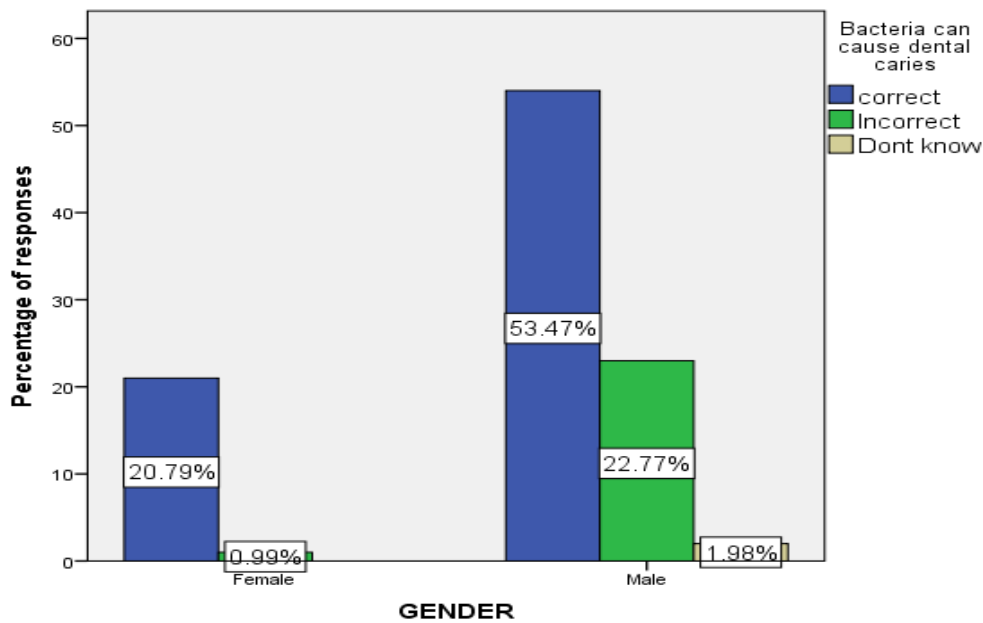


Figure 5: Bar Chart Representing The Association Of Gender And Responses For The Statement, ' Bacteria Can Cause Dental Caries'. Female Study Participants Were More Aware About The Role Of Bacteria In Dental Caries Causation When Compared With Male Study Participants And This Difference Was Found To Be Statistically Significant.

Chi Square Value - 6.630 P Value - 0.03

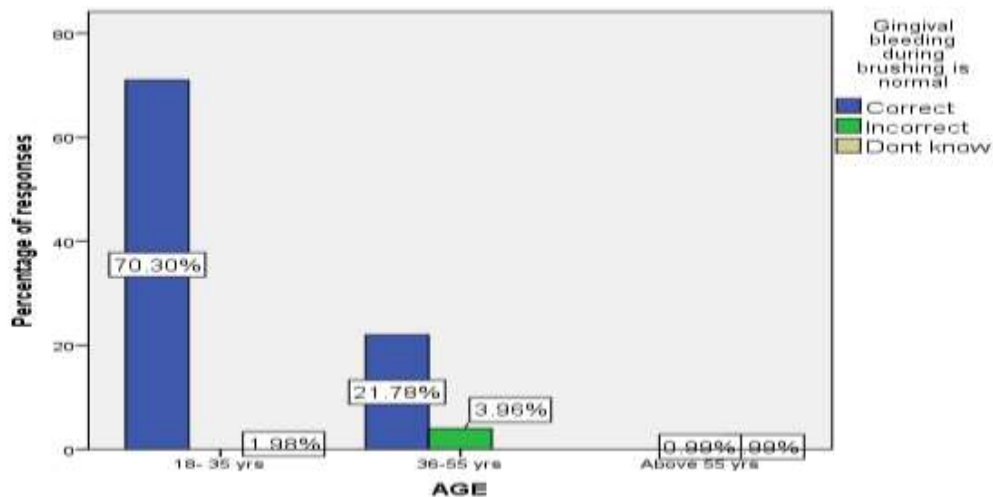


Figure 6: Bar Chart Representing The Association Of Age And Responses For The Statement, 'Gingival Bleeding During Brushing Is Normal'. Study Participants In The Age Group Of 36-55 Yrs Were More Aware About The Fact That Bleeding During Brushing Is Not Normal When Compared With Participants In Other Age Groups And This Difference Was Found To Be Statistically Very Highly Significant.

Chi Square Value - 35.42; 1 P Value - 0.000

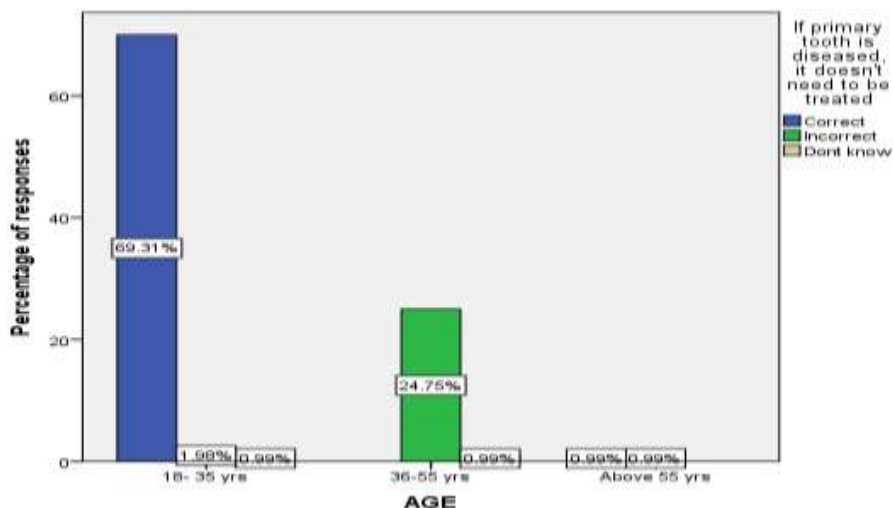


Figure 7: Bar Chart Representing The Association Of Age And Responses For The Statement, 'If The Primary Tooth Is Diseased It Doesn't Need To Be Treated'. Study Participants In The Age Group Of 36-55 Yrs Were More Aware About The Importance Of Primary Teeth When Compared With Participants In Other Age Groups And This Difference Was Found To Be Statistically Very Highly Significant.

Chi Square Value - 86.452; 1 P Value - 0.000

### Discussion

Attainment Of Good Oral Health Depends On Awareness Of Oral Hygiene Practices And Good Dietary Habits. The Need For Making Parents Aware Of The Brushing Methods And Importance Of Preventive Measures For The Children Via School Dental Programs Have Been Reported In The Literature.(26) In The Present Study, About 94% Of Parents Could Not Identify The Importance Of Adding Fluoride To Toothpaste. This Is In Contrast To The Other Studies In Which It Was Reported That Nearly Half Of The Respondents Were Aware About The Importance Of Fluoride.(27) Sugary Snacks Consumption Was Higher Among The Children Which Is Similar To The Other Study In Which The Majority Of The Children Were Reported To Consume Sugary Snacks.(26) There Are Also Other Barriers In Seeking Regular Dental Care, Including Availability Of Dental Services, Dental Fear, Cost, Income, Accessibility To Dental Clinics And Inadequate Training Among Dental Fraternity To Handle These Patients. Overall. Findings Of This Study Suggest Utilization Of Dental Services Among Children With Special Needs Show Huge Variation And There Are Both Environmental And Personal Factors Which Act As Barriers In Accessing And Utilization Of Dental Care Services. (28) Majority Of Dental Services In India Are Being Provided By The Private Dental Practitioners, Followed By Non-Governmental Organizations. Various Nation-Wide Surveys Have Been Conducted To Study The Pattern Of Utilization Of Dental Services By Indian Population. The Main Objective Behind These Surveys Was To Evaluate The Various Factors That Contributed Towards Utilization Of Dental Services By The People Residing In Varied Geographical Regions Of The Country And Factors Predictive Of This Behaviour. (29)

Dental Care Services Utilization Of Children Was Good In The Present Study Whereas Utilisation Of Oral Care Services Was Reported To Be Poor In Other Studies.(1) Dental Sealants Also Play An Important Role

In The Prevention Of Cavities. Sound Evidence Has Been Collected That The Preventive Dental Visits Improve Oral Health And Reduces Later Costs, Good Evidence That Fluoridation Therapy Decreases The Rate Of Dental Caries, Particularly In High-Rise Population. Paediatricians And Family Physicians Plays An Important Role In Identifying Children At High Risk For Dental Disease And In Advocating For More Comprehensive And Universal Dental Care For Children. The Primary Health Centers And Community Health Centers (Chcs) Offer An Opportunity For Early Diagnosis And Treatment, Dental Health Education, And Institution Of Preventive Measures In The Remote Areas. (29,30).

### **Conclusion**

From The Results It Can Be Concluded That Dental Care Services Utilization Of Children Was Good. Awareness About Oral Health Was Poor Among The Study Participants, However Awareness Was High Among Educated Parents When Compared With Uneducated Parents And Participants In The Age Group Of 36-55 Yrs.

### **Conflict Of Interest**

The Author Declares That There Was No Conflict Of Interest In The Present Study

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