

NEED OF INTRODUCING ORAL HEALTH CURRICULUM IN SAUDI SCHOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTION-A CROSS SECTIONAL SURVEY

Wadha Abdullah Al Otaibi¹ & Omar Olayan Al Harbi²

¹Registered Dental Hygienist, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

²Registered Dental Hygienist, ALQassim University, Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

Throughout the world 3.5 billion people are effected with oral diseases and Dental caries is a major Preventable Public health problem affecting 2.43 billion people.1The high incidence of dental diseases among Saudi children(80%) can be attributed to low awareness regarding the oral health and hygiene practices2. Even though there are many public awareness campaigns, health education programs & preventive interventions targeted at primary school children to promote good oral health behaviors, feeding practices, and dietary habits which are developed and implemented by Dental /Dental Hygiene Schools and Professional dental bodies; often they are not taken with serious attention. Therefore, the present study was conducted to understand the perception of Saudi population regarding the need of introducing an effective oral health curriculum to improve the oral health behavior and oral health status of the population.

KEYWORDS: *Dental Diseases, Oral Health Behavior and Oral Health Status of the Population*

Article History

Received: 14 Nov 2022 | Revised: 21 Nov 2022 | Accepted: 31 Nov 2022

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world 3.5 billion people are effected with oral diseases and Dental caries is a major Preventable Public health problem affecting 2.43 billion people.¹ The high incidence of dental diseases among Saudi children (80%) can be attributed to low awareness regarding the oral health and hygiene practices². Even though there are many public awareness campaigns, health education programs & preventive interventions targeted at primary school children to promote good oral health behaviors, feeding practices, and dietary habits which are developed and implemented by Dental /Dental Hygiene Schools and Professional dental bodies; often they are not taken with serious attention. Therefore, the present study was conducted to understand the perception of Saudi population regarding the need of introducing an effective oral health curriculum to improve the oral health behavior and oral health status of the population.

Materials & Methods

It was a population-based cross-sectional study design consisted of questionnaire for the consented participants after explaining about the study protocol. Sample size was calculated as 325 based on prevalence of 80%, 95%Confidence

Interval and p value of 0.05³. A close ended self-structured questionnaire comprising 19 of items were electronically administered in google form owing to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Frequencies and Distributions were summarized.

Result

Out of 326 responded, majority of the respondents 90.8% were aware of the importance of oral health. 60.5 % think that the society is aware of the importance of oral health

75.1% Agreed that introducing oral health curriculum into school is the most effective way to promote oral health and to reduce oral diseases .80.2% think that children's awareness of the importance of oral health can be a good way to spread awareness of oral health in the community / society. Majority of respondents 64% agreed that the Primary school is the proper level where children can be taught about oral health. 78.3% think that oral health curriculum should be introduced as theory along with practical .58.7% disagree with oral health curriculum should be introduced along with exams and grades. Majority 77.9% of respondents think that along with oral health curriculum, general health should be reinforced. 61% of the respondents have attended school awareness programs on oral health.

CONCLUSION

Children can be easily influenced towards positive behavior at early school years and the lessons learned can practiced throughout their life. Thus introducing oral health curriculum in school can play an important role which can change the society's behavior and attitude towards Oral Health. Further studies on educational expert opinions recommended for practical implications.

REFERENCES

1. WHO, *Oral Health, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 2020*
2. Al Agili DE. *A systematic review of population-based dental caries studies among children in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Dent J. 2013;25(1):3–11 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sdentj.2012.10.002>*
3. *among children in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Dent J. 2013;25(1):3–11 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sdentj.2012.10.002>*
4. *org/10.1016/j.sdentj.2012.10.002*
5. Alhabdan et al. *Prevalence of dental caries and associated factors among primary school children: a population-based cross-sectional study in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine (2018) 23:60*