

Oral Health Attitude of General Population & their Dental Treatment Choices: A Cross Sectional Study in Hyderabad

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the oral health attitude of general population in Hyderabad and their dental treatment choices.

Study Design: cross sectional study

Place & Duration: Out Patient Department (OPD) of Isra Dental College, Hyderabad from 1st July 2014 to 31st August 2014.

Material and Methods: This study included 2056 patients attending the Out Patient Department (OPD) of Isra Dental College. The information concerning different study variables including their demographic data, reason for visiting the dental OPD and treatment choices, was obtained on a questionnaire. SPSS version-21 was used for data analysis and variables were expressed in frequencies and percentages. Moreover, chi square test was used for categorical variable.

Results: Out of the 2056 patients in this study, 55.9% (n=1149) and 44.1% (n=907) were male and female respectively. Most of the patients were above 40 years of age 46.8% (n=963). It was found that dental pain was the most common reason for visiting the Dental OPD (n=1324; p=<.001). Most of the patients preferred to save the tooth and opted for Root Canal Treatment (n=470; p=<.001).

Conclusion: Attitude and treatment choices of patients reflect educated behavior and knowledge as a large amount of the people favored Root Canal Treatment however, a noticeably number of them opted for extraction over saving the tooth. There is need of improvement in spreading awareness about dental hygiene and better treatment options by involvement of dental health professionals.

Keywords: Attitude, Behavior, Oral Health, Treatment

INTRODUCTION:

Good quality oral health, which includes gingival health as well as good sound teeth, plays a significant part of our general health.¹⁻³ Oral Health is currently perceived as similarly essential in connection to general wellbeing. The manner of an individual towards oral wellbeing relies on his

own experience, way of life, convictions, social qualities, monetary status, time and impact of his environment.^{1,4} According to American Dental Association recommendations, individuals should regularly visit a dentist and brush and floss at least once a day in order to avoid oral diseases.^{2,6,7}

Accordingly knowledge and awareness is exceptionally vital so as to stay away from numerous complications and diseases. Oral infections keep on being persistent health issue. Specifically, oral diseases make a critical and unreasonable weight to the developing as well as the developed nations.^{1,8-12}

Concerning the behavior, it is seen that the people with a background of good sound education tend to appreciate the significance of oral health and its maintenance.⁵ It has also been observed that people of high socioeconomic status tend to

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use more dental services. Whereas, people of low socioeconomic status do not avail dental services.¹³ Individuals of middle class are found to be more aware of dental health than the lower wage individuals. In this way financial status plays a vital part in taking choices about accepting the kind of dental treatment.¹² Lack of knowledge, education and awareness of oral hygiene comes as one with low financial status in this part of the world. The basic reason the patient visits the dental surgeon in our area is because of severe dental pain. The persistent reason for dental suffering is either untreated periodontal illnesses or dental caries.^{1,5,12} Specifically, infection related to the gum and adjoining parts as well as dental caries make a huge and exorbitant burden for the individuals.^{5, 12} Poor oral wellbeing is straightforwardly identified with social monetary status as it is very predominant in low-wage populations.¹³⁻¹⁵ The present study was directed to assess the attitude and dental treatment choices among Isra Dental Hospital patients living in Hyderabad.

MATERIAL & METHODS:

Our study is a cross sectional study on the general population (N= 2056), visiting the Dental OPD of Isra Dental College, Isra University from 1st July 2014 to 31st August 2014 were recruited. Patients coming to the OPD of Isra Dental College are generally both from rural and urban areas as Hyderabad is a small city and adjoining cities don't have tertiary based hospitals in their localities. All subjects were equally selected into this simple random study. Patients in general came with different problems of their teeth.

A questionnaire composed of patients' bi-data which included gender, age, name as well as area of living, presenting complain, the examination and the treatment done. Importance was given on gender, age, complain, indication and type of treatment. These questions helped to evaluate their own understanding and knowledge regarding dental health. All the data, after compilation, was analyzed and the results were put together. SPSS version-21 was used to analyze the data. The study variables were expressed in frequencies and percentages. Moreover, chi square test was used

for categorical variable.

RESULTS:

In this study, a total of 2056 patients visited the dental OPD, out of which 55.9% were males (n=1149), and 44.1 % were females (n=907). Age distribution of the patients varied as most of the patients were above 40 years of age (n=963) and the lowest number of patients were of <9 years age group (n=39). Out of these patients 27% (n=556) belonged to rural area, 73% (n=1500) belonged to urban area.

Whereas, 41.1 % (n=844) were literate and 58.9 % (n=1212) were illiterate. The following table shows demographic distribution of the patients [Table 1].

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Patients who Attended the Dental OPD

Demographic Variables		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	1149	55.9
	Female	907	44.1
Age (years)	< 9	39	1.9
	10-19	276	13.4
	20-29	199	9.7
	30-39	579	28.2
	> 40	963	46.8
Locality	Rural	556	27.0
	Urban	1500	73.0
Literacy Level	Literate	844	41.1
	Illiterate	1212	58.9

The subsequent graph demonstrates, allocation of patients with respect to their purpose behind dental visit, the most widely recognized reason noted for the dental visit was pain which contains around 64.4 % with the higher extent of females. Least common reason behind visits was orthodontic treatment which was 0.1% [Figure 1].

Patients visiting the OPD, with varying dental problems, were referred to different dental departments [Table 2]. Maximum number of patients was referred to restorative or operative

dentistry 51.8% (n=1066) and minimum to the orthodontics 0.1% (n=2).

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DISCUSSION:

This study was the first of its kind in this region and was performed to evaluate attitude, behavior and awareness of people with concern to dental health and treatment. In previous studies, dental pain was seen as mainly the frequent reason for dental visit.^{6,16,17} International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP), defines pain as “a disagreeable sensory and emotional experience of subjective nature”.¹⁶ Dental caries as well as periodontal diseases is more likely to be the main cause of dental pain among individuals.¹⁸⁻²⁰ Findings suggest that people of low socio-economic status are directly linked to excruciating dental pain as most of the patients ignore caries and leave it untreated until it becomes a dental hazard.^{12,13} Attitude, behavior and awareness of people about oral and dental health was made obvious by the literature, showing that least priority and limited importance was given to dental health in people with low socioeconomic status.^{13,14,21} Moreover, individuals visit a dental hospital OPD or a private dental surgeon only when the pain has become unbearable and all home remedies have failed.¹⁸ People don't tend to visit the dental surgeon on routine basis, this is because of lack of dental health education and its promotion.²²

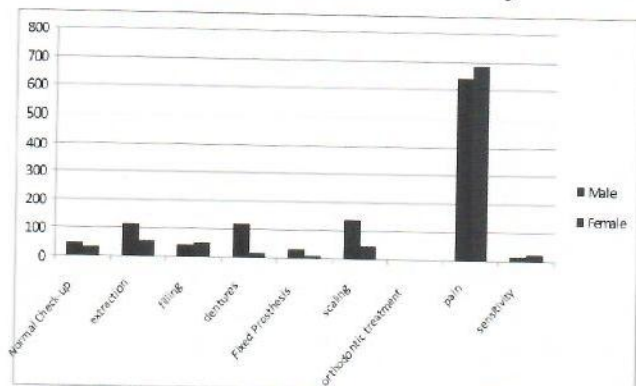


Figure 1: Bar Chart Showing Primary Reason of Visiting OPD ($\chi^2= 145.9$; $p<0.001$).

Table 2: Distribution of Patients Receiving or Declining Dental Treatment in Different Departments ($\chi^2= 103.3$; $p<0.001$)

Department	Treatment	No Treatment	Total
Oral Surgery	347	132	479
Operative Dentistry	677	389	1066
Periodontology	287	44	331
Orthodontics	0	2	2
Prosthodontics	86	92	178
Total	1397	659	2056

Table 3: Shows the Trends Amongst the Patients With Complain of Pain and their Subsequent Different Treatments that they Received.

Department	Trend of Patients Receiving Different Treatments with the Complain of Pain						Total
	Medication	Extraction	RCT	Filling	Scaling	No Treatment	
Oral Surgery	46	230	0	0	0	26	302
Operative Dentistry	104	7	470	141	0	223	945
Periodontology	21	0	0	0	38	18	77
Total	171	237	470	141	38	267	1324

The general population's knowledge regarding dental health was poor with more prevalence in people of low socioeconomic status.^{10, 11, 23}

Proper oral health education campaigns, use of media either printed or electronic can be the only approach to spread awareness of oral and dental health to the population of Pakistan. The disease burden in Pakistan is most aggravated due to poor living conditions, poverty and less awareness of oral diseases and its education. Government funding is almost nil for oral health education.^{24,25} Oral health should be of prime importance to the general population and it should be focused by the local authorities and the government in order to maintain healthy lives. Being a developing country, Pakistan is a country where there are economic, social, behavioral, political and environmental barriers to health. For this reason, it is a major test for oral health experts to minimize the burden of oral problems (particularly periodontal diseases and dental caries) in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, results of the present study showed that population of Hyderabad lack positive attitude and awareness towards dental treatment. This research discloses an important fact that dental pain is the most common reason for visiting the dental OPD. Attitude and treatment choices of patients reflect lack of education, awareness and knowledge as a large amount of the people favored extractions more willingly than saving the tooth. There is need of improvement in spreading awareness about dental hygiene and better treatment options by involvement of dental health professionals.

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