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Research Article

**PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE TOWARD DENTAL
CARE AMONG SAUDIS ADULTS IN AL-DAMMAM CITY,
SAUDI ARABIA**Marwah Ahmed Hassan Al-Manasif¹, Maram Ahmad almanasif², Miral Ahmed almanasif³, Azzah Turki Alshehri⁴, Hawra Ali Abdullah Hamada², Haidar Jawad Alkhalifah³¹Medical Dammam Complex, ²Alfarabi College, ³Riyadh Elm University, ⁴Gp at Hawtat Sudair PHC**Abstract:**

Background: The prevalence and incidence of dental problems has significantly decreased in most of the developed countries because of significant increase in the level of awareness toward oral health among general population. However, caries incidence and prevalence have increased in the Middle East countries because of the lack of level of awareness, thus we need to increase the level of awareness.

Aim: To evaluate the knowledge and attitude towards oral health hygiene and early dental treatment among general community in Al-Dammam city, Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out based on questionnaires which randomly distributed among 400 adults participants in Al-Dammam city. The questionnaire included socio-demographic information [gender, age and education] and the patient's level of awareness of oral health hygiene and early dental treatment. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS.

Results: 400 adult participants have filled the surveys and most of them were males [58%] and females were 42%. The majority of participants were young whom aged 20-30 years old and most of participants have bachelor degree or above [53%]. Participants who had dental caries were 60.5%, and all the participants knew that poor oral hygiene can cause caries. Fortunately, more than 70% of participants believed that caries is preventable and topical fluoride, flossing and fissure sealants prevent caries [65%, 31% and 25%] respectively. Regarding the participants' attitude and practice, the results showed negative attitude and practice toward visiting dental clinics and using floss to clean their teeth [13.25% and 3.5%] respectively.

Conclusion: It was concluded that the majority of adults in Al-Dammam city had acceptable knowledge regarding preventive measurements of dental caries but have bad attitude and practice thus, we need to increase and improve the level of awareness.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Awareness, Practice, Dental treatment, Oral hygiene, Saudi Arabia.

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INTRODUCTION:

The prevalence and incidence of dental problems has significantly decreased in most of the developed countries because of the significant increase in the level of awareness toward oral health hygiene general population [1]. However, caries incidence and prevalence have increased in the Middle East countries, thus we need to increase and improve the level of awareness [2]. There are many studies conducted to assess the caries incidence and prevalence in Saudi Arabia [3, 4]. Two studies conducted in Al-Riyadh city, capital of Saudi Arabia reported that caries prevalence was 78% and 94% in 1992 and 2004, respectively [3,4]. In addition, one study was conducted in Jeddah in 2000 reported that caries prevalence was 83% among primary school children [5].

Dental health awareness is the main precaution to reduce caries prevalence [6]. It was reported that children’s oral health conditions were influenced by their parents’ knowledge and attitude towards dental health care and treatment [7]. Also, Oral hygiene measurements are effective in treating and preventing dental caries [8]. The main factor responsible for decline incidence of caries is fluoride[9]. There are many studies proved that fissure sealants prevent dental caries although they are not used commonly in the prevention of dental caries in Saudi

Arabia[10]. Study published in Saudi Arabia, mothers showed positive attitudes toward the dental preventive measures, however, most of them were not convinced that treatment of the child’s dental caries was necessary[11]. Prevalence of dental caries showed increased significantly because of lack of knowledge about preventive dental measurements among Saudi community.

METHODOLOGY:

A cross-sectional descriptive study based on questionnaires were distributed randomly on 400 Saudis participants randomly chosen from different public places whom aged 20-60 years old in the period between March 2018 and May 2018, Al-Dammam city, Saudi Arabia.

It was consist of two parts. The first part was about the patient’s socio-demographic information [age, gender, and education level]. The second part was related to the patient’s knowledge regarding oral health hygiene and preventive dental measurements.

Data entering were performed using Excel and data analysis was done by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS]. Ethical approval for this study was from the research center in Al-Riyadh city.

RESULTS:

Table 1: social-demographic information of participants [400]:

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------|
| Age group | 20-30 | 178[44.5%] |
| | 31-40 | 102[25.5%] |
| | 41-50 | 70[17.5%] |
| | 51-60 | 50[12.5%] |
| gender | Male | 232[58%] |
| | female | 168[42%] |
| education | Bachelor and above | 212[53%] |
| | Secondary | 131[32.75%] |
| | Middle | 40[10%] |
| | Primary | 15[3.75%] |
| | Non educated | 2[0.5%] |

A total of 400 Saudis participants have filled the questionnaires and most of them were males [58%] and females were 42%. The most of participants were aged 20-30 years old [44.5%], participants aged 31-40 years old were [25.5%] and those aged 41-60 years old were 30%. Regarding the education level we found that more than half of participants have bachelor degree [53%] and about [33%] have secondary school degree while non-educated was only [0.5%] table 1.

Table 2: public knowledge and attitude towards oral health hygiene and preventive measurements:

| questions | yes | no |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Is poor oral hygiene causes caries? | 400[100%] | 0[0%] |
| Can we prevent the caries? | 295[73.75] | 105[26.25] |
| Do you think children need to visit dental clinic? | 144[36%] | 256[64%] |
| Do you have caries on your teeth? | 242[60.5%] | 158[39.5%] |
| Do you brush your teeth every day? | 189[47.25%] | 211[52.75%] |
| Do you use dental floss every day? | 14[3.5%] | 386[96.5%] |
| Do you visit dentist regularly? | 53[13.25%] | 347[86.75%] |
| Flossing can prevent caries | 125[31.25%] | 275[68.75%] |
| Topical fluoride can prevent caries | 262[65.5%] | 138[34.5%] |
| Fissure sealants can prevent caries | 101[25.25%] | 299[74.75%] |
| Early treatment can decrease the complication of caries? | 392[98%] | 8[2%] |

Table 2 shows the prevalence of dental caries and the level of knowledge and attitude among participants. More than half of participants have dental caries [60.5%] and all participants know that poor oral hygiene causes caries [100%]. Also, 73.75% believe that caries is preventable. Regarding preventable measurements participants believed that topical fluoride prevent caries [65%] but fissure sealants and flossing did not prevent caries [74.75% and 68.75%] respectively. . Unfortunately, about two-third of participants thought that children do not need to visit dental clinics [64%]. Regarding the attitude, most of participants showed negative attitude of oral hygiene in which [52.75%] do not brush their teeth regularly and [86.75%] do not visit dental clinic regularly. Almost all patients believed that early treatment can decrease the complication of caries [98%].

DISCUSSION:

A cross-sectional study evaluated the level of awareness and attitude among community in Al-Dammam city, Saudi Arabia. The response rate was 100%. Almost half of the

participants were young adults [20–30 years]. Regarding gender participants, we found that male participants were higher than female participants. This might be because males were available in public places than females in Saudi Arabia. The majority of the participants were found to have good knowledge regarding the relation of dental caries and oral hygiene. However, it was reported that dental caries prevalence was still increasing in Riyadh[12]. Also, one study found that the caries prevalence among preschool children in Riyadh was 74.8%[12]. Another study has published that over half of the dentists in Saudi Arabia agreed that parents were in need to improve their attitudes toward dental preventive care[13]. Most of the participants thought that no need for children to visit dental clinics. There was a study conducted to assess the parents' response to dental visit and found that it was inconvenient due to the young age of children and difficulties to control them[14].

Most of the research participants did not visit dental clinic regularly. A study done in 2002 concluded that only 40% of the population

visited the dental clinic regularly[14].

A Study reported that fluoride application is an effective method in preventing dental caries[15]. This study showed that more than half of the participating adults knew that topical fluoride application helps in caries prevention. Most of Study participants do not believe that sealants prevent caries which oppose with other study which found that 76% of the dentists knew the role of fissure sealants in caries prevention in Togoo [16]

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