

Attitude and Awareness of Patients Parents towards Pulp Therapy: A Clinical Survey**Nithya Tomy, Faizal CP¹, Jerin Jose, Soni Kottayi²**

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Good oral health is an essential to attain good general health. Many a time, parents feel or believe that since primary teeth will any way shed, it is not worth to spend time/ money on providing treatment for primary teeth in children. Many of them are not aware that primary dentition should be maintained in the dental arch in a healthy state for the overall health of the child.

Aim: The purpose of the study was to assess the awareness of patients parents towards pulp therapy of teeth in sub-urban locality of Kannur, Kerala.

Methodology: The study was conducted in the Department of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry of a dental hospital situated in a suburban locality of Kannur for a period of 6 months. Total 200 parents were included in the study. A set of questions with multiple-choice answers were formulated. This questionnaire was personally given to parents of the child patients requiring pulp therapy for primary teeth.

Results: Only 40% of the parents are interested in preserving the primary teeth of their children by pulp therapy treatment while the rest 60% are not interested in pulp therapy. About 75% of the parents feel that the pulp therapy treatment of their child's primary tooth will cause problems in their child's permanent dentition. The main reason for the parents not showing interest in pulp therapy treatment is that they feel that it is unnecessary (58%) while 28% of the parents refuse treatment because of economic reasons and 13% refuse treatment because of the time consumption.

Conclusion: Dentists should try to initiate a positive attitude to treatment modalities of primary teeth in our society

Keywords: Attitude, Awareness, Pulp therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Health is a universal human need for all age groups. Good oral health is an essential to attain good general health. The mouth is considered as the mirror of the body and the gateway to good health.¹ Many a time, parents feel or believe that since primary teeth will always shed, it is not worth to spend time/ money on providing treatment for primary teeth in children.²

The dental caries in young children is a challenging problem and it is easy to control this problem if groups of population with greatest needs are identified. High risk group children should be identified and categorized

which in turn will help in determining needs for restorations and to implement primary preventive procedures to these groups of children.³

Many parents feel there is no need of treating primary tooth as it sheds off. Many of them are not aware that primary dentition should be maintained in the dental arch in a healthy state for the overall health of the child. To maintain a good oral health in children, parents have a major role to play. Studies have shown that positive attitude of mothers towards her and her child, has direct influence on child's oral health.⁴ Therefore study was conducted in a

dental hospital, situated in sub-urban locality of Kannur, Kerala which had inflow of both urban and rural population for dental treatment to assess the awareness of patient's parents towards pulp therapy of teeth.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in the Department of Pediatric and Preventive Dentistry of a dental hospital situated in a suburban locality of Kannur for a period of 6 months. Total 200 parents were included in the study. A set of questions with multiple-choice of answers were formulated. This questionnaire was personally given to parents of the child patients requiring pulp therapy treatment for primary teeth. The parents were asked to tick the most appropriate answer from the list of given answers. The printed questionnaire was distributed to the parents, both in English and local language for their better understanding, and help was provided to few parents who were uneducated (ill literate) to read and understand the questions. The purpose and nature of the study was explained, and strict confidentiality was assured. Once the questionnaire was answered, the importance of need for pulp therapy and primary teeth were explained. A filled questionnaire with responses was thus collected immediately and computed.

RESULTS

A total of 200 subjects from both urban and rural areas were surveyed to ascertain the knowledge and also the attitude of parents regarding pulp therapy of primary teeth in the Kannur suburban area. Questionnaires were given to the parents of the patients who visited the hospital for dental treatment of their children whose age ranged from 22-38 years.(Table 1) The data thus collected were analyzed.

In our study, most of the parents had 2/more children (86%) while only 14% had single child. Most of the children came for treatment were the younger ones (74%) when compared to elder ones (26%). The number of urban

patients (14%) seeking treatment was less as compared to rural patients (86%).(Figure 1) About more than half of the parent accompanying the child were unemployed (52%) while (48%) were employed. 50% of the parents were only having education upto 10th, 12% upto 12th and the rest 30% had qualified degree. Pulpal conditions were the prime reasons among the populations for making their dental visit with a percentage of 48. Other reasons for dental treatment included aesthetics (18%), routine dental checkup (26%), discoloration (7%).(Figure 2)

Table 1: Demographic Data

CHILDS AGE
RANGE: 4-12
AVERAGE AGE: 6.6 YEARS
PARENTS AGE
RANGE: 22-38
AVERAGE AGE: 32.5 YEARS
SEX OF THE CHILD
MALE: 45%
FEMALE: 55%
NUMBER OF PARENTS ATTENDING CLINIC:
200
SEX OF THE PARENT ATTENDING CLINIC:
MALE – 35%
FEMALE – 65%
NUMBER OF SIBLINGS:
NO SIBLINGS – 14%
ONE SIBLING – 14%
TWO SIBLING – 60%
THREE/ MORE SIBLING – 26%
AREA OF RESIDENCE
URBAN: 14%
RURAL: 86%

Figure 1: Residence of Family

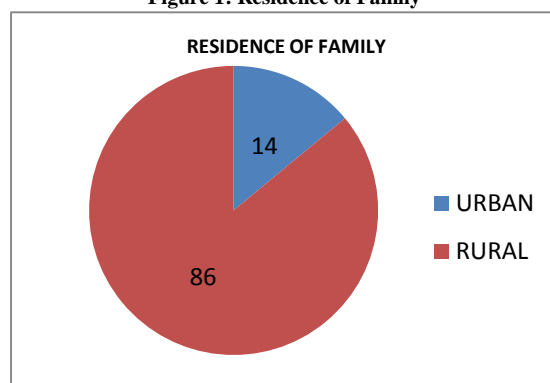
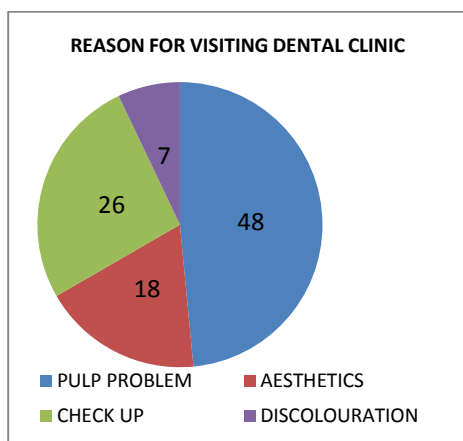


Figure 2: Reason for Visiting Dental Clinic



About 40% of the parents are not aware of the need for treatment of primary teeth while 60% feel there is a need for treatment.(Figure 3) 19% of the parents feel that decay extending to the pulp needs pulp therapy while 71% feel there is no need for that. Only 40% of the parents are interested in preserving the primary teeth of their children by pulp therapy treatment while the rest 60% are not interested in pulp therapy . About 75% of the parents feel that the pulp therapy treatment of their child’s primary tooth will cause problems in their child’s permanent dentition while 25% disagree with the above mentioned. The main reason for the parents not showing interest in pulp therapy treatment is that they feel that it is unnecessary (58%) while 28% of the parents refuse treatment because of economical reasons and 13% refuse treatment because of the time consumption.(Figure 4)

Figure 3: Parent's Attitude towards Pulp Therapy

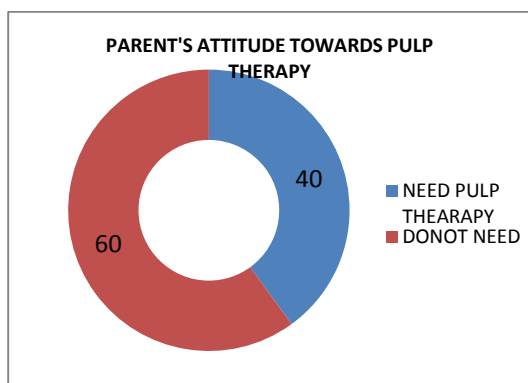
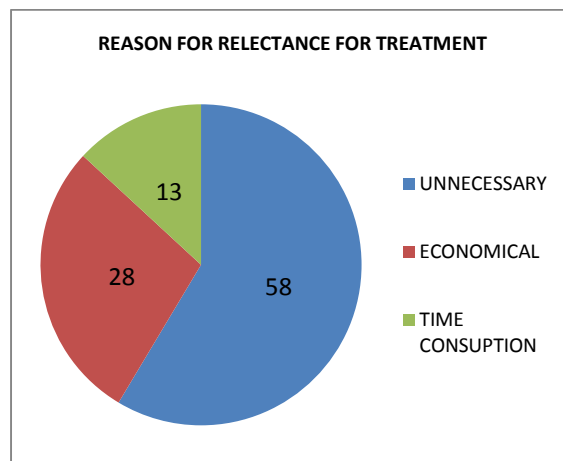


Figure 4: Reason for Relectance for Treatment



DISCUSSION

There is an increasing prevalence of caries in children nowadays. Various studies show that prevalence of dental caries for children of 5-6 age group varies from 70% in Bangalore (Urban) , 53% in Davangere (Urban) , 25% in Davangere (Rural) , 50.8% in Andhra Pradesh (Rural) , 51.46% in Kerala (Rural)⁵ and 54.1% prevalence of dental caries among 3-5 year old children in Hubli was 54.1%.³ An epidemiological investigation was carried out to know the prevalence of Dental Caries amongst children in Kannur District, Kerala and a point prevalence of dental caries was recorded to be 49.44% with an average DMFT/deft of 2.63.⁶

Dental environment of a young child is complex because their mothers’ and/or caregiver’s dental knowledge, practices, beliefs and attitudes, affect the child’s oral condition.^{7,8} In a study conducted by Simratvir et al they found that there was lack of knowledge among pregnant ladies and mothers of child upto 1 year about oral health. The study also showed that majority of mothers/pregnant females were cleaning their child’s mouth using cotton gauze.⁹ In a study conducted among care givers of children none of them were even aware about pedodontics as a specialty¹⁰ and a study conducted among pediatricians in Ghaziabad district, India had a good practice and attitude, but had moderately

less knowledge and lacked proper awareness about dental caries.¹¹

It is very important to educate the parents about the oral hygiene measures and also the treatment aspect of caries in children. There should be a prime concern about implementing anticipatory guidance for oral health in the healthcare system. It can be defined broadly as a process of providing practical and developmentally appropriate health information about children to their parents on anticipation of significant physical, psychological and emotional milestones.¹²

The deep dental caries cannot be restored by simple restorations. For those primary tooth other options are available other than extraction. Parents should be made aware of the treatment option ie pulp therapy treatment. In our study parents did not feel there is a need of treating primary tooth and many of them were not even aware of pulp therapy treatments. Some parents even believed that treating the primary tooth can even damage their child's permanent tooth.

The main reasons for reluctance of parents towards pulp therapy are :

- Less awareness regarding dentistry
- Poor awareness from health care professionals including pediatricians
- Less awareness about importance of primary tooth

In our study most of the parents were from rural area and they were not well educated. The parents should be well educated about the importance of primary tooth and the need of pulp therapy in decays involving the pulp. Parents should be informed about the fact that the child must undergo a dental examination at the time the first tooth appears in the oral cavity and a regular routine dental check-up should be followed which will be helpful to save the child and the parent from a lot of trouble.¹³

CONCLUSION

In Indian society especially in rural areas there is low level of oral health awareness and

initiation of dental visits. There is a need of create awareness about the importance of first dental visit among society especially uneducated rural population. We as dentists should try to initiate a positive attitude to treatment modalities of primary teeth in our society.

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