

Knowledge of primary school teachers on prevention of dental caries among primary school students, and their influence on practice in the Nallur Educational Division, Jaffna.

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Background: Dental caries is one of the common oral health problem in children and it is preventable. Teachers are also suitable person to give awareness as children spend the morning time with their school teachers. Hence, this study was undertaken to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of school teachers towards prevention of dental caries. This study aimed to assess the knowledge and attitude of primary school teachers on prevention of dental caries among primary school students and their influence on practice in the Nallur Educational Division, Jaffna.

Methods: This was school based descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among 251 primary class teachers from 35 schools, in Nallur Educational Division. A self-administered questionnaire was used to assess knowledge, attitude, and practice of primary school teachers on prevention of dental caries. All data collected was entered in SPSS version 23.0.

Results: In this study only half no. of teachers.(49.8%) were aware that bacteria cause dental caries. Nearly 25% of teachers knew the circular brushing technique and only 3.9% of teachers knew that children must change their tooth brush after bristles are damaged. Over all knowledge of teachers is poor in prevention of dental caries. Among teachers 95.1% of them have a practice of monitoring the food pattern of their students. Instructions on brushing technique to students have been given by 92.7% of primary school teachers. Nearly 64% of teachers have checked the oral cavity of students. Only 87.8% of teachers attended an oral health education session held by the school dental therapist.

Conclusion: The knowledge regarding etiology of dental caries and brushing among primary school teachers were unsatisfactory. Only half of the participant teachers had good practice towards prevention of dental caries. Oral health education and training must be given to all primary school teachers and supervised tooth brushing programme in primary schools should be established.

Keywords: Knowledge, Dental caries, primary schools, Jaffna, Teachers