

# AWARENESS ON ORAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE AMONG ELDERLY PATIENTS IN INDIAN POPULATION - A SURVEY

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**ABSTRACT** --*To create awareness on oral hygiene among elderly patients in South Indian population. Oral hygiene is associated with health related quality of life that impact the general well- being of an individual in physical, mental and social domains. Approximately 68% of the adults aged 65 years or above have periodontitis. Hence dental care is considered to be the essential contributing factor to experience a healthy life in elderly and prevent general health complications. In this survey there were 100 participants in which all of them were elderly patients aged 50 years or above. It is a questionnaire based online survey. 17 questions were asked related to oral hygiene using survey planet.About 50% of the participants were not able to eat all kinds of foods which they like and 52.3% of the participants are not comfortable with all kinds of food they eat. About 34.2% of them lost mainly molars and premolars. As they are used for mastication predominantly followed by anterior teeth(19.3%).About 27.3% of them consulted a dentist, 45.5% of them took self remedies and the remaining 27.3% of them did not take any measures. Fear and expense were the main excuse for not taking any measures. About 13.6% of the patients accepted that they don 't show any kind of interest towards taking a treatment.About 71.6% of the elderly population accept that they do not have enough knowledge about the oral hygiene. Professional health care services is low among elder people. Hence it is in the hands of dentists to create awareness about oral hygiene and importance of consulting a dentist at equal intervals. Dentist must initiate to provide treatment in a good quality as well as at low expense. So that they come forward to take up the treatment.*

**Keywords--** *awareness oral health hygiene among elderly patients in indian population - a survey*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Oral hygiene is associated with health related quality of life that impact the general well being of an individual in physical, mental and social domains(1).Oral health maintenance is difficult and different in old people. In India, with its population of over one billion people, people older than 60 years constitute 7.6% of the total population(2,3). Incidence of oral cancer, which is a predominant old age disease, is highest in India and also approximately 68% of the adults aged 65 years or above have periodontitis (4). Periodontitis is a risk factor for many

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systemic disease and also masticatory problems and nutritional insufficiency in elderly and promotes negative impact on quality of life. It can lead to diabetes mellitus, ischemic heart disease and chronic respiratory disease(5).

Especially in developing countries, the need for dental care is essential due to deficient manpower. The negative impact on oral health cause more difficulty among edentulous patients(6,7). It can cause weight loss since they avoid dietary rich foods, fats and cholesterol. Tooth loss has been linked to stroke and poor mental health. Poor oral care can also lead to denture related problems, xerostomia and altered sense of taste and smell(8,9). Hence dental care is considered to be the essential contributing factor to experience a healthy life in elderly and prevent systemic health complications(10-12).

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is an online survey. It is a questionnaire based online survey conducted using survey planet among 100 participants who were aged 50 years or above. A total of 17 questions were asked related to oral hygiene.

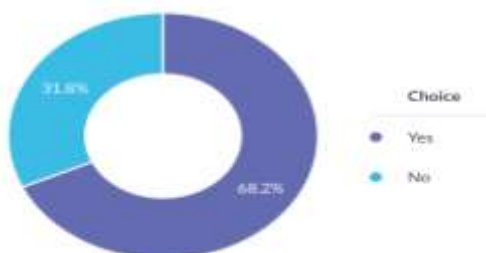
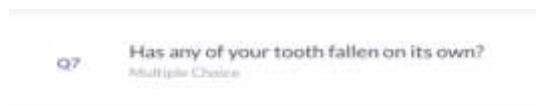
## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From this survey, about 50% of the participants were not able to eat all kinds of foods which they like and 52.3% of the participants are not comfortable with all kinds of food they eat. Major reason is missing teeth(55.3%), tooth pain(20%) and the rest is due to any other health conditions. Mainly edentulous patients are prone to this difficulty. The main causes can be loss of teeth and mobility. About 64.8% of patients prefer soft foods as they could not chew the hard foods. Tooth loss is either because of severe dental caries or periodontal problem(9). Tobacco use is also a risk factor in tooth loss, particularly among people with a high consumption over many years(10).

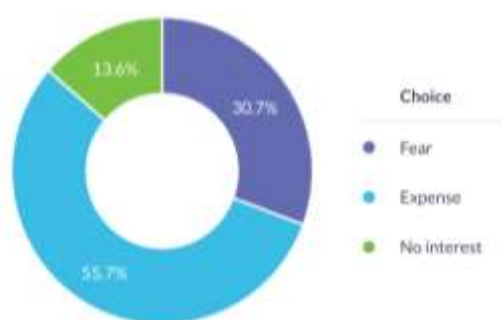
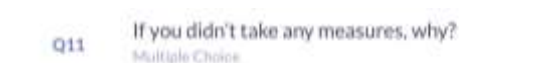


About 68.2% of the participants agree that some of their tooth has fallen on its own. This can either be due to poor oral hygiene practices or disinterest towards oral hygiene. Poor socio economic status plays a role in this situation. Expense and lack of awareness leads to tooth loss(11). Most of the patients visit to dentist only when there is ache or discomfort. Until then they remain with the damaged tooth. About 34.1% of them lost mainly

molars and premolars. As they are used for mastication predominantly followed by anterior teeth(19.3%). Correlating to the previous result, 80.2% have difficulty while chewing. Poor brushing technique is also a major reason for masticatory problems(12).



If asked about the measures they have undertaken for this difficulty, only about 27.3% of them consulted a dentist, 45.5% of them took self remedies and the remaining 27.3% of them did not take any measures. Fear and expense were the main excuse for not taking any measures(13,14). About 13.6% of the patients accepted that they don't show any kind of interest.

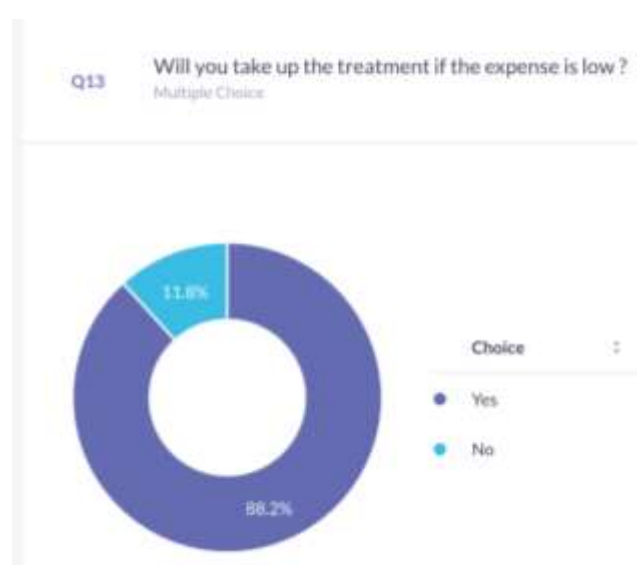


About 43.2% of the elderly populations are wearing a prosthesis. The wearing of dental prosthesis is one of the factors that can improve the quality of life of the old edentulous people(15,16). In this study very low number

of population is wearing the prosthesis compared to the people with missing teeth. This is because dental prosthesis is not affordable by people in developing countries where the socioeconomic level is low.



According to the survey about 88.2% are willing to take up the treatment if the expense is low. Considering the



oral health habits, about 73.9% of the participants use brush and paste, 12.5% use neem stick and rest 13.6% use tooth powder for cleaning purpose. Only About 22.7% accept that they brush twice a day regularly. It is essential to keep our oral cavity clean to avoid any kind of oral health issues. Only about 14.3% of the participants mentioned they have visited the dentist for own check up or cleaning and the rest 85.9% visited only when there is a discomfort.



#### IV. CONCLUSION

About 71.6% of the elderly population accept that they do not have enough knowledge about the oral hygiene. Barriers to access to oral health care facilities are distance, finance and lack of interest in consulting a dentist. Hence more awareness may be created about oral hygiene and importance of consulting a dentist at equal intervals. Oral health is essential for overall health of an individual.

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