

# AWARENESS ABOUT PRIMARY TEETH AND THEIR CARE AMONG GENERAL DENTISTS - A SURVEY

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## Abstract

*Often the oral care of children is overlooked because of the fact that primary teeth are replaced by permanent dentition. Proper knowledge and awareness about primary dentition and its care among practicing dentists is essential in order to educate parents about the importance of oral care from a young age. The aim of this study is to assess the awareness about primary teeth and the care of primary teeth among general dentists. 100 dentists currently doing their internship in Chennai were surveyed using a multiple choice questionnaire. Responses obtained were tabulated and the results of the questionnaires were computed in percentages. 83% of the dentists surveyed said it was sufficient to brush once, 17% of the dentists surveyed felt it was essential to brush twice. 12% felt that chocolates were the chief cause of decay, 6% felt that prolonged bottle feeding predisposed children to caries, 7% felt that improper brushing technique could be the cause of decay, 75% of the dentists surveyed felt it was a combination of all the other factors that led to decay. This study found that the majority of dentists screened did have sufficient knowledge and awareness about the care and treatment of primary teeth. Any void in knowledge indicated by this study is a worrying concern and must be rectified by highlighting and stressing the importance of primary teeth during undergraduate education.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Children, Primary Dentition, Health Knowledge, Child Care, Primary Teeth*

## Introduction

Oral cancer basically influences people in the 6th and seventh many years of existence with a past filled with

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Teeth are an important advantage for people. Every single person has two arrangements of teeth – one set of essential dentition from birth to six years old and the second set which is the changeless dentition that starts erupting around six years and endures till death. Normally more significance will in general be allowed to the subsequent set (ie) the lasting dentition however as a general rule the essential dentition is as significant, if not a higher priority than the changeless dentition.

There is a typical misguided judgment that milk teeth will shed and henceforth don't require legitimate support and care (Ravishankar et al., 2010). The essential teeth or milk teeth are imperative to youngsters for eating, biting, talking, phonetics, feel and in any event, for space support for eruption of permanent teeth. Issues with the milk teeth can trouble the youngster prompting failure to bite or talk appropriately, torment and growing (B & Nagaveni, 2011; Ravishankar et al., 2010).

Without essential information on caries hazard factors, significance of deciduous dentition and oral upkeep, utilizing preventive measures gets troublesome (Finlayson et al., 2007) however lately there has been a critical diminishing in the pervasiveness of dental caries in a large portion of the created nations. (Steele-Moses et al., 2008) Anyway kids from creating or lacking countries are as yet found to have high caries pervasiveness. This is on the grounds that adequate information and mindfulness about dental consideration may not be effectively open or accessible in these creating and lacking nations. (Arnrup et al., 2001)

This study was carried out in order to assess the knowledge of general dentists about primary dentition and their care in Chennai.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was conducted among 100 dentists who were doing their internship in Chennai. Voluntary and strict confidentiality was assured. A questionnaire was prepared and used to assess the knowledge and awareness about primary teeth and their care. The results were then tabulated and analysed. A conclusion was then arrived at based on the findings of this study.

## **RESULTS**

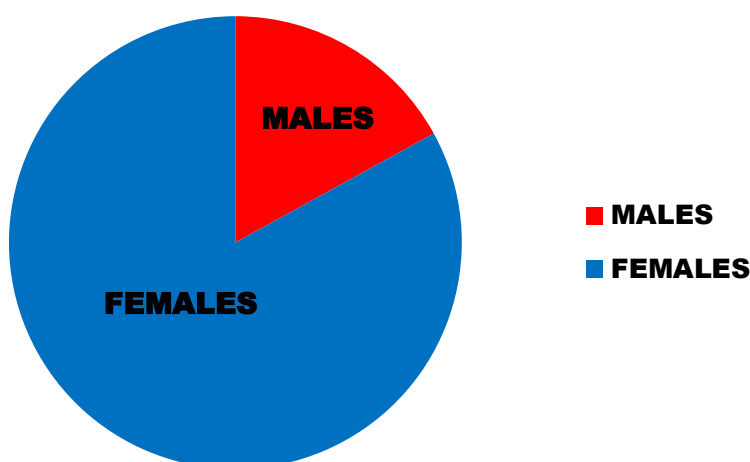
A total number of 100 dentists were surveyed to assess their knowledge about primary teeth. Out of the 100 dentists surveyed 83% were female and 17% were male (Table 1, Graph 1). Out of the 100 dentists surveyed 89% of the dentists surveyed said yes, primary teeth are important, 7% of the dentists surveyed said no, primary teeth are not important and 4% of the dentists surveyed were not sure (Table 2, Graph 2). Out of the 100 dentists surveyed, 87% of the dentists surveyed said yes, primary teeth must be treated, 8% of the dentists surveyed said

no, primary teeth need not be treated and 5% of the dentists surveyed were not sure whether primary teeth required treatment or not.(Table 3 ,Graph 3).Out of the 100 dentists surveyed ,83% of the dentists surveyed said it was sufficient to brush once and 17% of the dentists surveyed felt it was essential to brush twice.(Table 4 ,Graph 4).Out of the 100 dentists surveyed ,12% felt that chocolates were the chief cause of decay,6% felt that prolonged bottle feeding predisposed children to caries,7% felt that improper brushing technique could be the cause of decay and 75% of the dentists surveyed felt it was a combination of all the other factors that led to decay.(Table 5,Graph 5).Out of the 100 dentists surveyed,82% of the dentists surveyed said that yes, pulpally involved primary teeth can be treated and 18% of the dentists surveyed said no, pulpally involved primary teeth cannot be treated ,(Table6 ,Graph 6).Out of the 100 dentists surveyed,42% of the dentists surveyed said that an extraction was the best method of treatment for a pulpally involved primary tooth ,39% of the dentists surveyed said that a root canal treatment was the best mode of treatment for a pulpally involved tooth and 18% of the dentists surveyed said that no treatment was required for a pulpally involved primary tooth(Table 7,Graph 7)Out of the 100 dentists surveyed,94% of the dentists surveyed said that yes and 6% of the dentists surveyed said no (Table 8,Graph 8)

**TABLE 1: DISTRUBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO SEX**

<b>MALES</b>	<b>FEMALES</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>

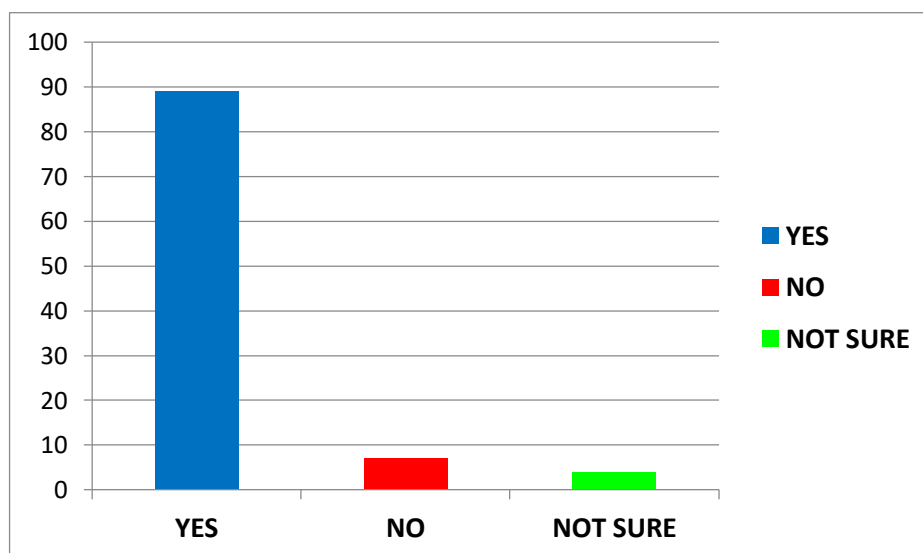
**GRAPH 1:DISTRUBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO SEX.**



**TABLE 2: IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY TEETH**

<b>YES</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>NOT SURE</b>	<b>4</b>

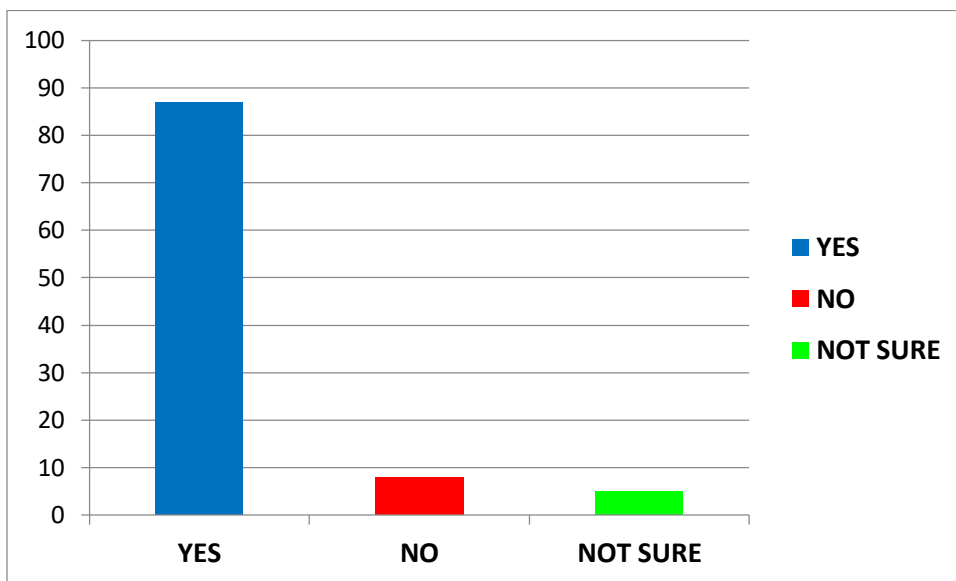
**GRAPH 2 : IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY TEETH**



**TABLE 3: TREATMENT OF PRIMARY TEETH**

<b>YES</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>NOT SURE</b>	<b>5</b>

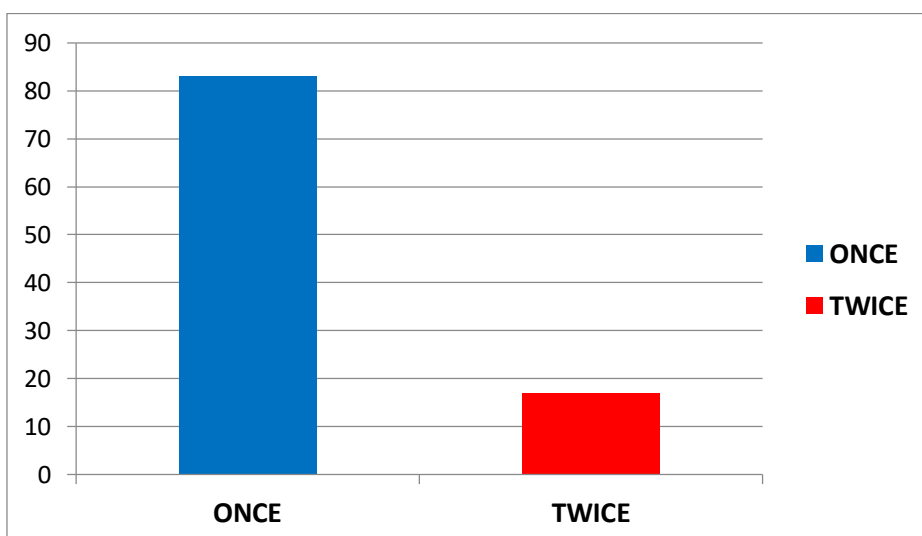
**GRAPH 3 : TREATMENT OF PRIMARY TEETH**



**TABLE 4: FREQUENCY OF BRUSHING**

ONCE	83
TWICE	17

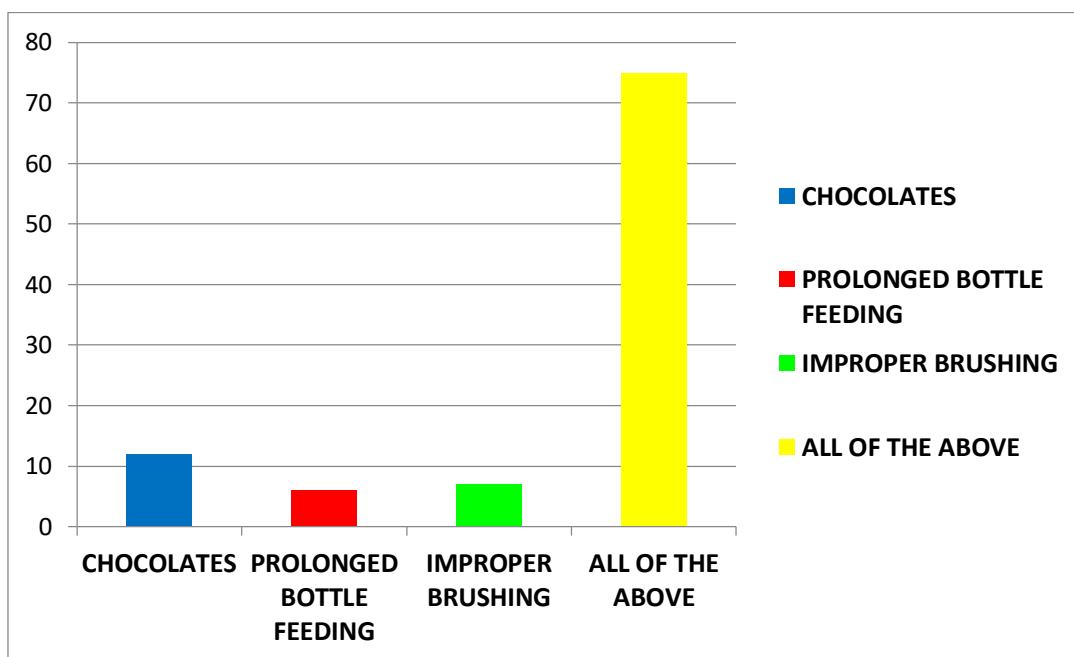
**GRAPH 4 :FREQUENCY OF BRUSHING**



**TABLE 5: CAUSES FOR DECAY**

<b>CHOCOLATES</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>PROLONGED BOTTLE FEEDING</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IMPROPER BRUSHING</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>COMBINATION OF THE ABOVE FACTORS</b>	<b>75</b>

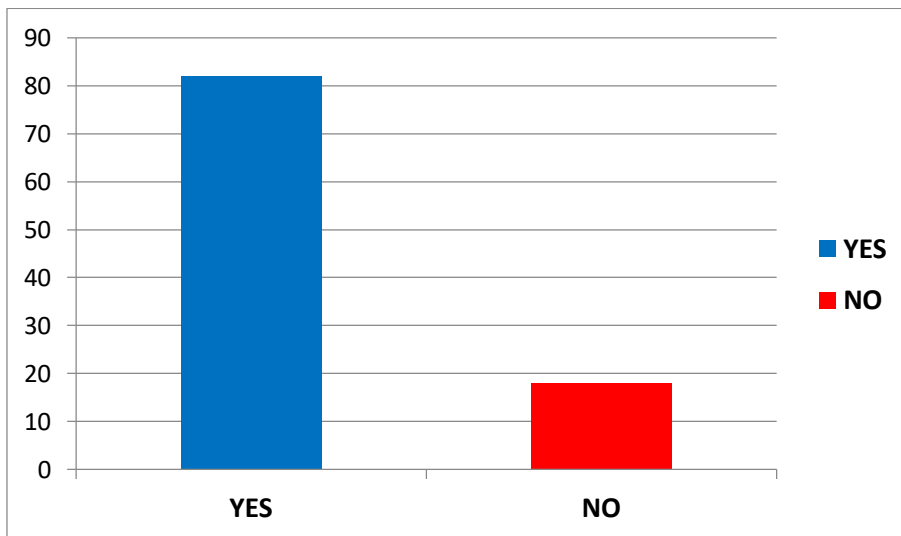
**GRAPH 5 :CAUSES OF DECAY**



**TABLE 6: TREATMENT OF PULPALLY INVOLVED PRIMARY TEETH**

<b>YES</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>18</b>

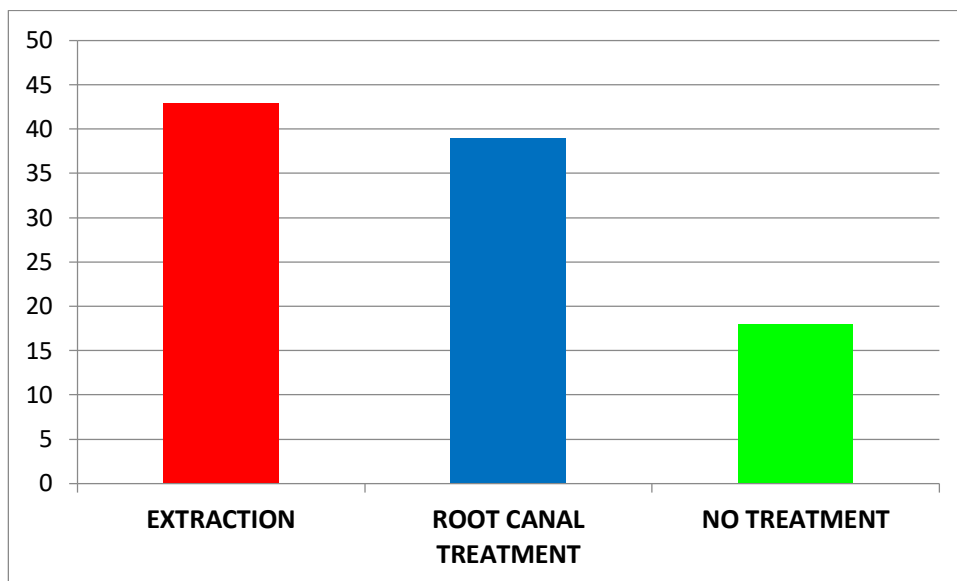
**GRAPH 6: TREATMENT OF PULPALLY INVOLVED PRIMARY TEETH**



**TABLE 7: BEST METHOD OF TREATMENT FOR PULPALLY INVOLVED PRIMARY TEETH**

<b>EXTRACTION</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>ROOT CANAL TREATMENT</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>NO TREATMENT</b>	<b>18</b>

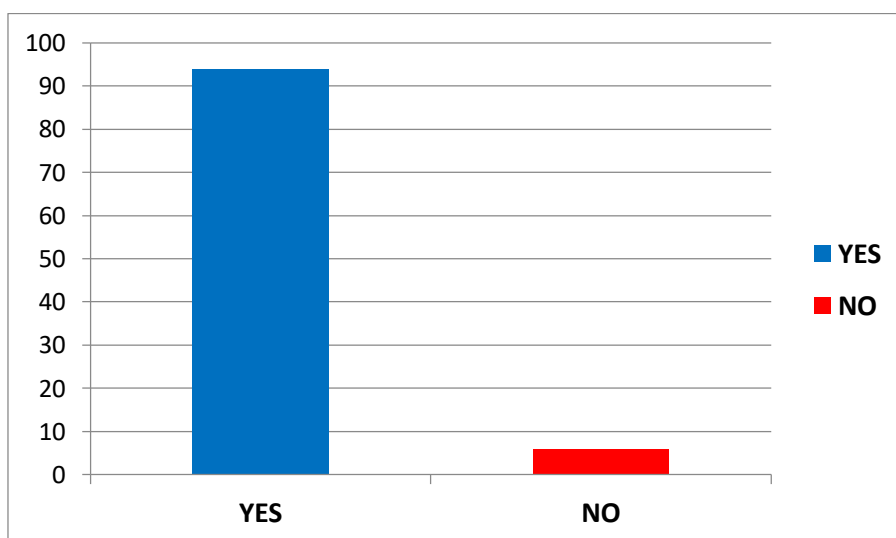
**GRAPH 7: BEST METHOD OF TREATMENT FOR PULPALLY INVOLVED PRIMARY TEETH**



**TABLE 8 :AWARENESS OF PEDIATRIC CROWNS**

YES	94
NO	6

**GRAPH 8 : AWARENESS OF PEDIATRIC CROWNS**



**DISCUSSION**



Primary teeth, otherwise known as baby teeth, milk teeth, temporary teeth and deciduous teeth are the first set of teeth in the development of humans. They erupt during infancy and are usually lost or replaced in early childhood but in some cases they are retained and remained functional for years .(Bath-Balogh & Fehrenbach, 2011; Wake et al., 2000)

In the above survey we can see that 89% of dentists said that primary teeth were important while 7% of the dentists said that primary teeth were not important and 4% of the dentists said that they were not sure whether the deciduous dentition was important or not.. So we can safely assume that the majority of dentists consider deciduous dentition as important as the permanent dentition. The other seven dentists on being asked why they felt that primary teeth were not important felt that since the deciduous teeth were going to exfoliate anyway and be replaced by a second set of dentition, a lot of importance need not be given to the primary teeth .(Oswal, 2010; Kim & Ahn, 2018)

We can presume that the same reasoning can be given for their response to the second question too. The results of our survey showed that while nearly 87% of dentists said that primary teeth must be treated, 8% of the dentists felt that it was unnecessary and 5% of the dentists surveyed were unsure about their course of action.

Many a time it so happens that the people responsible for the oral care of **children**, themselves feel or believe that it is not important or imperative to spend time, money and effort on providing good oral health to children. This is a disquieting attitude and must be addressed. Even though a five or seven percent minority, in the long run it can lead to a problem of larger magnitude. As the saying goes, ‘A stitch in time saves nine’.

It is important to emphasize the importance of oral health care from the time of eruption of the first tooth(Setty & Srinivasan, 2011). This will ensure that the child gets a routine dental check up and any problems can be identified and treated in the early or nascent stages (Curzon & Pollard, 1997) Maintaining healthy primary teeth is essential to a child’s overall oral health as well as his or her general development .(Asnani, 2010; Scheer, 1989)

We, as health care professionals, need to treat all problems equally irrespective of the age of the patient. We need to stress on the fact that primary dentition must also be given as much value as the permanent dentition. Any dissent or disagreement of this statement indicates a worrying void in the knowledge being absorbed or imparted at the undergraduate level. A small problem ignored in a child may manifest as a larger concern at a later date. This issue must be corrected otherwise it will have far reaching consequences.

## CONCLUSION

While this study found that the majority of dentists screened did have sufficient knowledge and awareness about the care and treatment of primary teeth, any void in knowledge indicated by this study is a worrying concern and must be rectified by highlighting and stressing the importance of primary teeth during undergraduate education.

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#### **Conflict of Interest :**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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