

Knowledge, Attitude and practices of parents about child oral health in Chennai-A Questionnaire based study

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ABSTRACT:

Mothers dental knowledge has a vital role on children's dental health. Oral health is an integral part of general health in infants and children and impacts the quality of life and health outcome. A common misconception that milk teeth of children will exfoliate and there is a less need to seek expert dental advice may lead to various dental problems. Parents knowledge affects their behaviour towards maintaining oral hygiene practice. However, only a weak relation exists between knowledge and behaviour. There are reports that there is an association between increased knowledge and better oral health. Aim of the study is to analyse the knowledge, attitude and practices of parents about child oral health in Chennai.

KEYWORDS: Oral health, knowledge, attitude, practices, parents.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Oral health is an integral part of good general health in children and infants and impacts the quality of health outcomes.(1). Examining the roles of mother and father, Mother spend more time in everyday activities with their children and they are the primary source of physical comfort, and safety for the child.(2,3). Mothers use to teach children proper hygiene skills, dietary habits and healthy practices.(4). A study by Moalleni et al showed that mother's oral health attitude and knowledge are positively related to their's child dentition.(5). There is a common misconception among the parents that milk teeth of their children will fall and do not require any care.(4). But, problems in milk teeth leads to inability to chew or speak properly, pain and swelling.(6). It has been found that the more positive is the parents, attitude towards the dentistry, the better will be the dental health of their children.(7). Dental caries is one of the most common dental problems caused by Streptococcus mutans. Improper feeding practice by the parents or caregivers increase the risk of caries by Streptococcus mutans.(8). Without basic knowledge of caries risk factors, importance of deciduous teeth and oral maintenance,

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it is difficult to employ effective disease preventive strategies.(9). Developing an effective dental health promotion strategy must be based on understanding of the unique needs of the population. Thus, the assessment of the knowledge and practice of mothers may be the first step in identifying areas of weakness and trying to change behaviours (10). Aim of the study is to analyse the knowledge, attitude and practice of parents about child oral health in Chennai.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS:

It is a questionnaire based study. The study was conducted in dental hospital where the child came with the parents for dental problems. 100 parents were selected for this study.

Data was collected using pretested questionnaire. A self administered questionnaire that was formulated first in English and then translated to Tamil, the language of study participants and the questionnaire was distributed to the study participants. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions which include questions to assess the knowledge of milk teeth, oral hygiene practices, knowledge about dental problems and attitude among parents.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. How many times do you brush your child's teeth?
 - a. Once in a day.
 - b. Twice in a day.
 - c. After every meal.
2. What materials do you use to clean your's teeth?
 - a. Tooth paste.
 - b. Tooth powder.
 - c. Any other.
3. When do you change your child's tooth brush?
 - a. Once in a month.
 - b. Every 2-3 month.
 - c. Once the bristles fray out.
4. Does your child rinse the mouth after drinking/eating?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
 - c. Sometimes.

5. Which of the following aids are used to clean your child's teeth?
 - a. Finger.
 - b. Tooth brush.
 - c. Others.
6. What is the most common dental disease in the child?
 - a. Tooth decay.
 - b. Bleeding gums.
 - c. Discoloured teeth.
 - d. Others.
7. Which of the following do you think prevents tooth decay?
 - a. Restricting sweets.
 - b. Tooth brushing.
 - c. Regular visits.
 - d. All the above.
 - e. I don't know.
8. How many milk teeth are there in a child's teeth?
 - a. 10
 - b. 12
 - c. 20
 - d. I don't know.
9. It is necessary to take child for regular dental visit.
 - a. Agree.
 - b. Disagree.
 - c. Uncertain.
10. Cleaning of child's teeth should be done by mothers.
 - a. Agree.
 - b. Disagree.
 - c. Uncertain.
11. It is necessary to clean the child's teeth after every meal.
 - a. Agree.

b. Disagree.

c. Uncertain.

12. Milk teeth don't require good care as it is going to fall anyway.

a. Agree.

b. Disagree.

c. Uncertain.

13. When was child's first dental visit?

a. 6months after birth.

b. After the eruption of first milk tooth.

c. 1 year after the birth.

d. Not yet visited.

14. When do you take your child to visit the dentist?

a. Only during the problems.

b. Every 6 months.

c. Every 1 year.

15. When did you commence the cleaning of yours child teeth?

a. Soon after 1st milk eruption.

b. After 1 year.

c. Don't remember.

III. RESULTS:

CHART-1

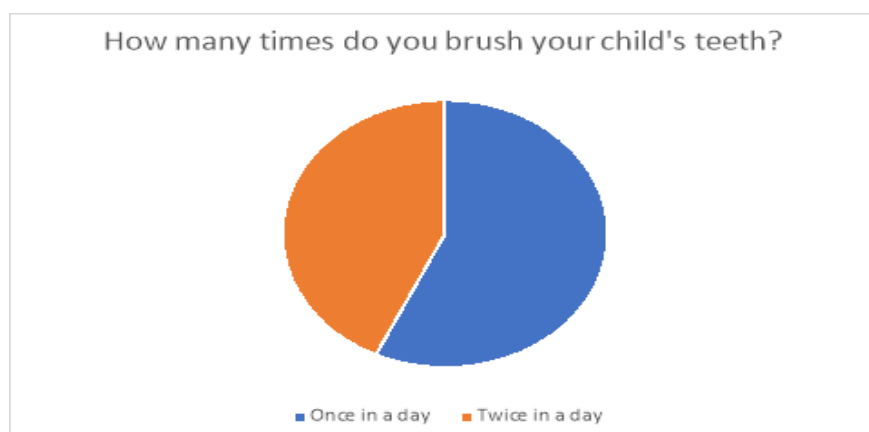


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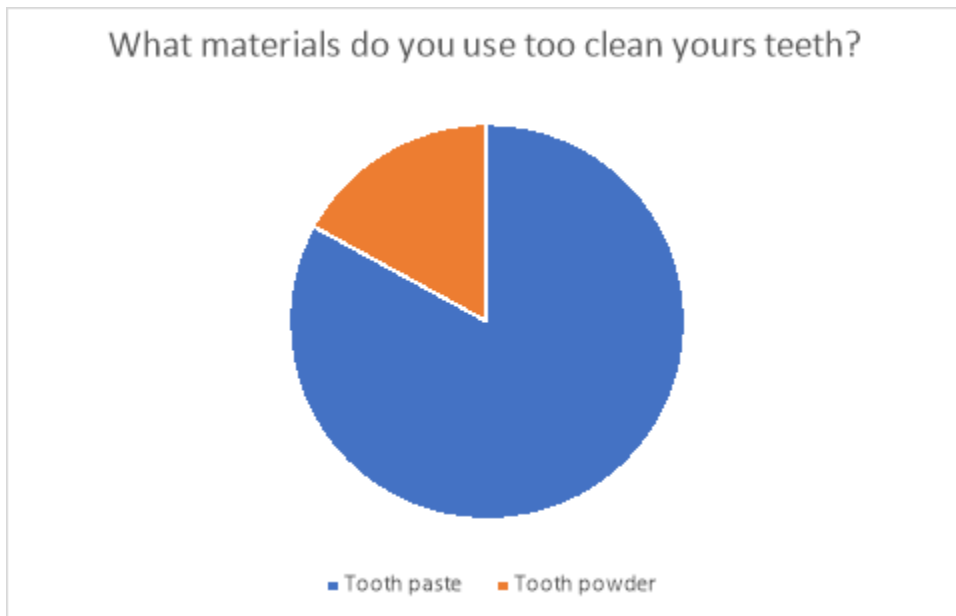


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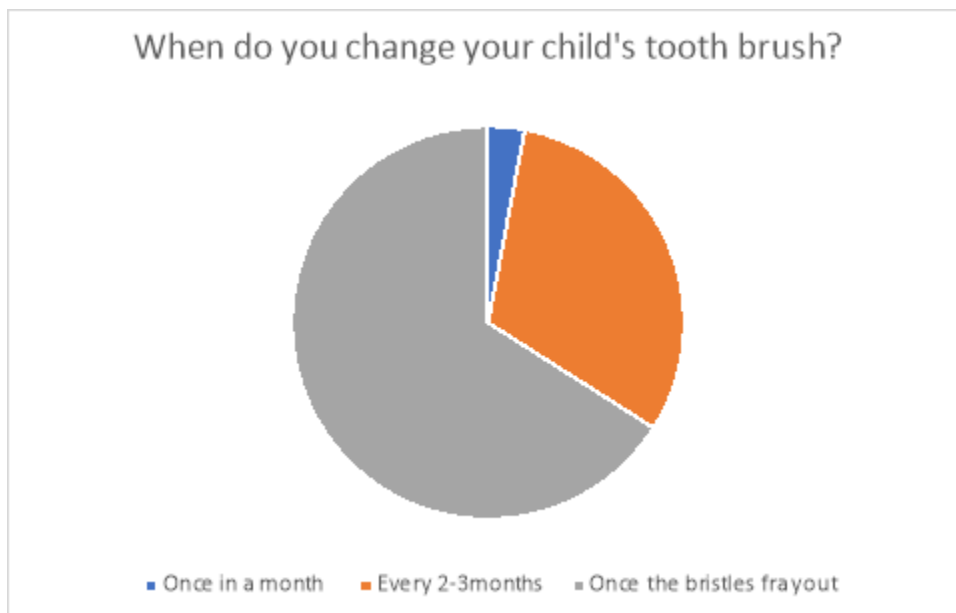


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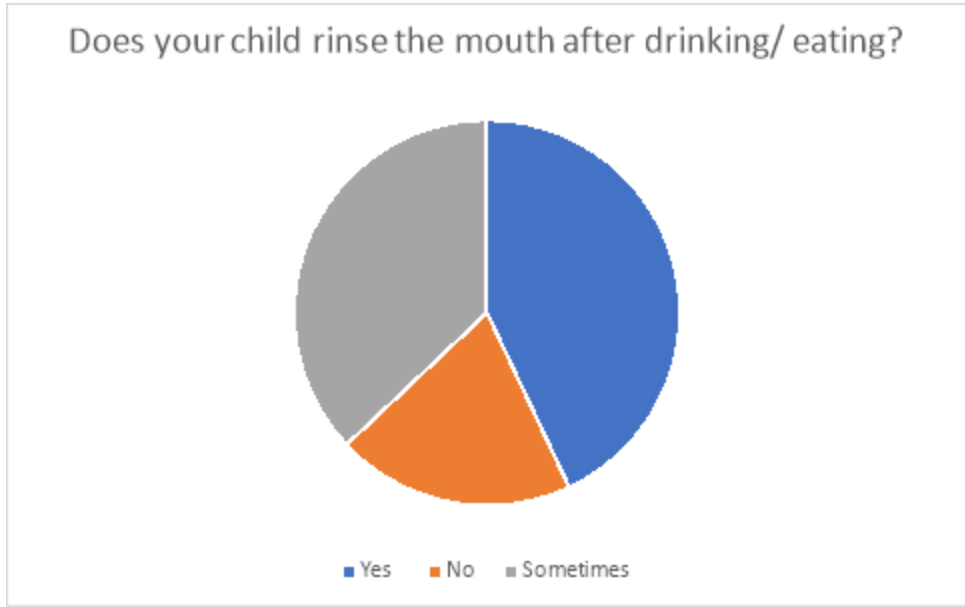


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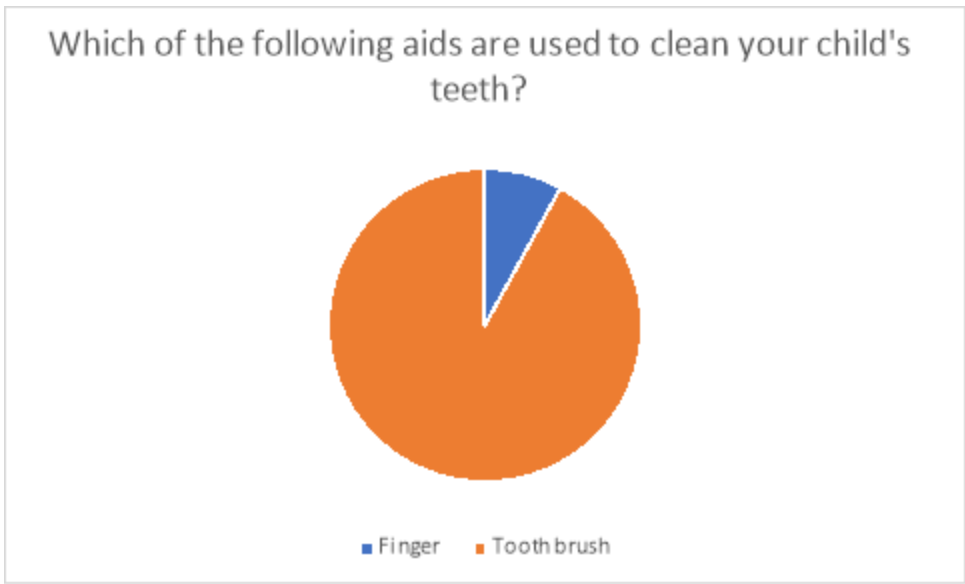


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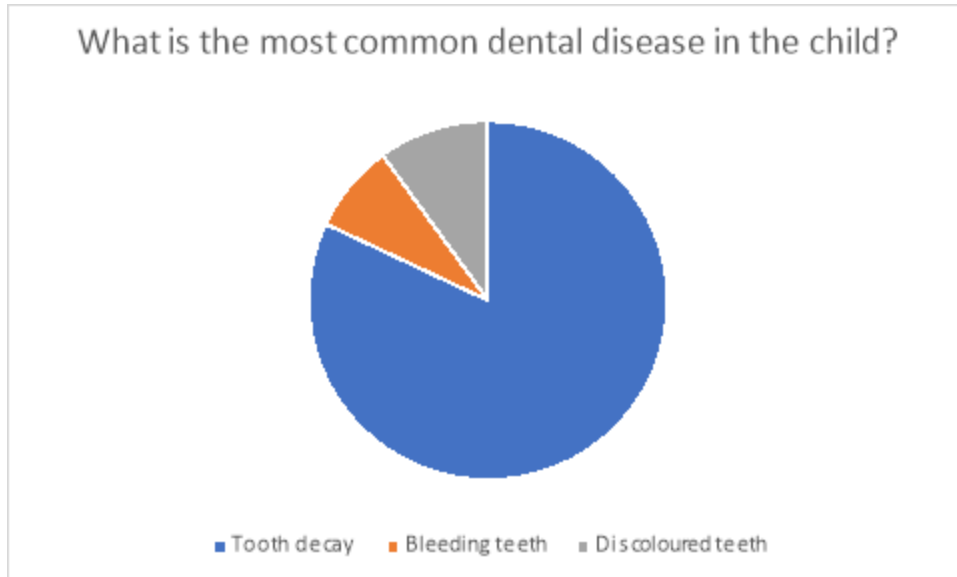


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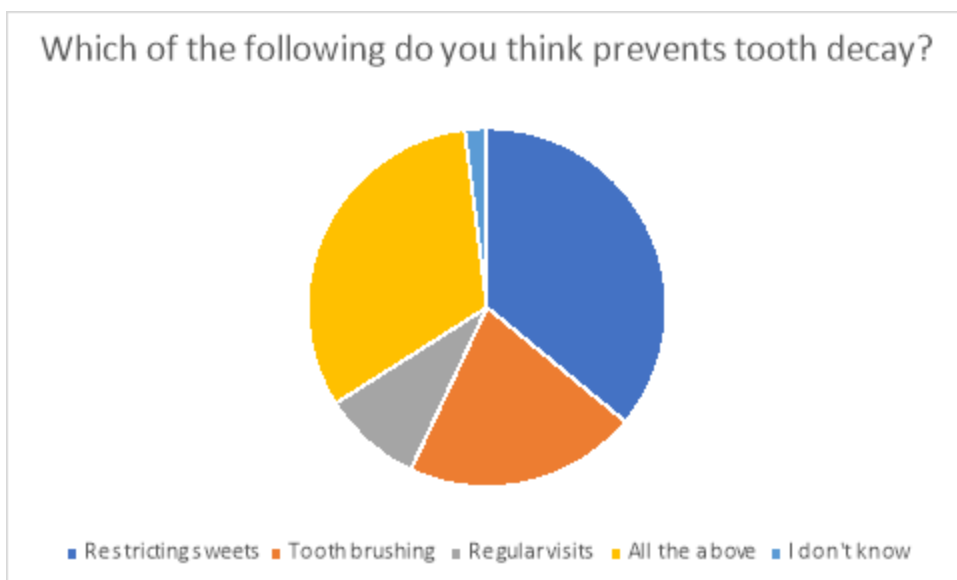


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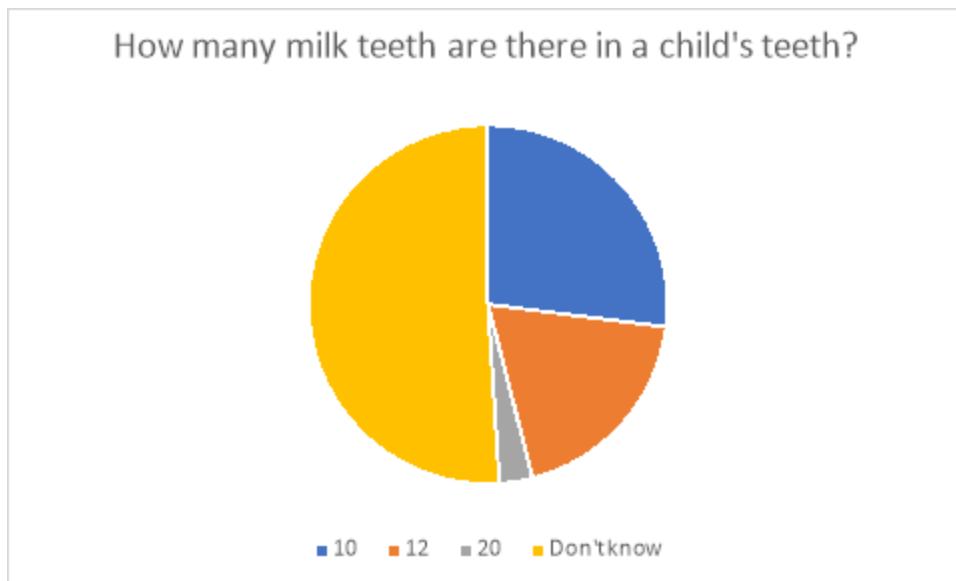


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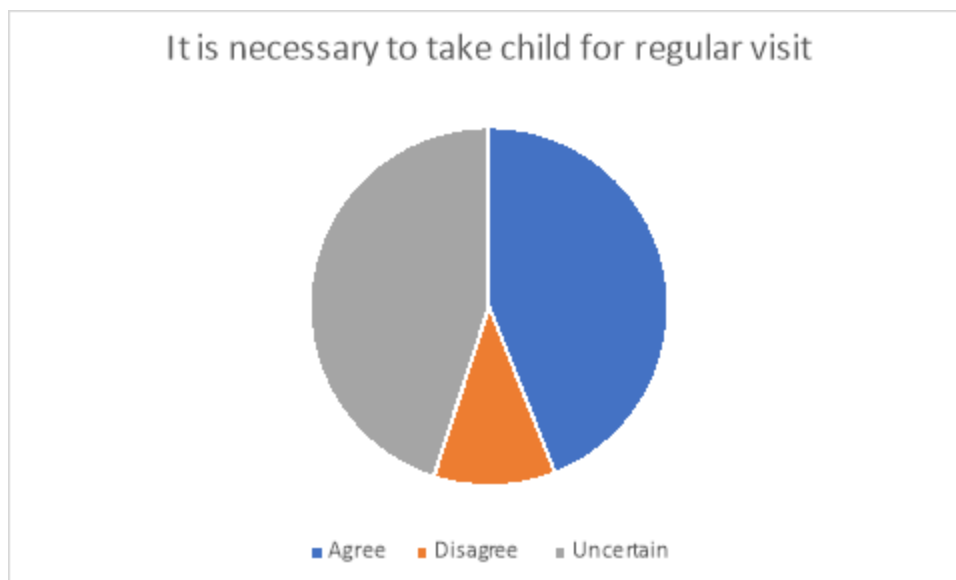


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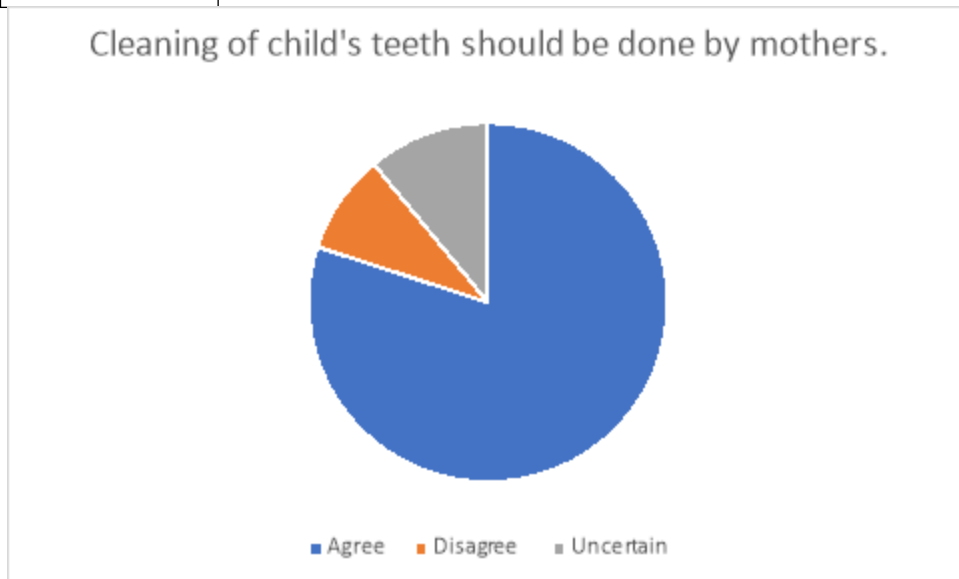


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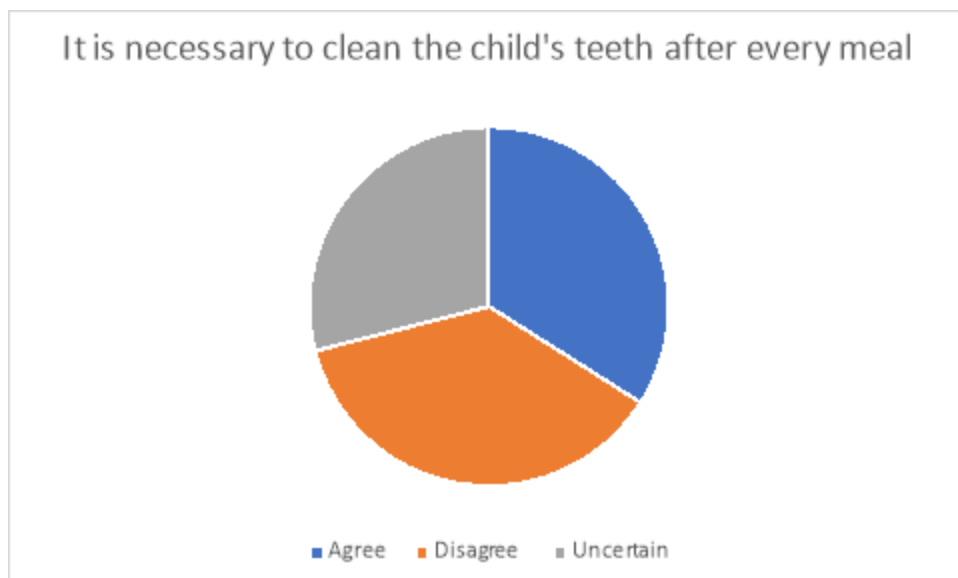


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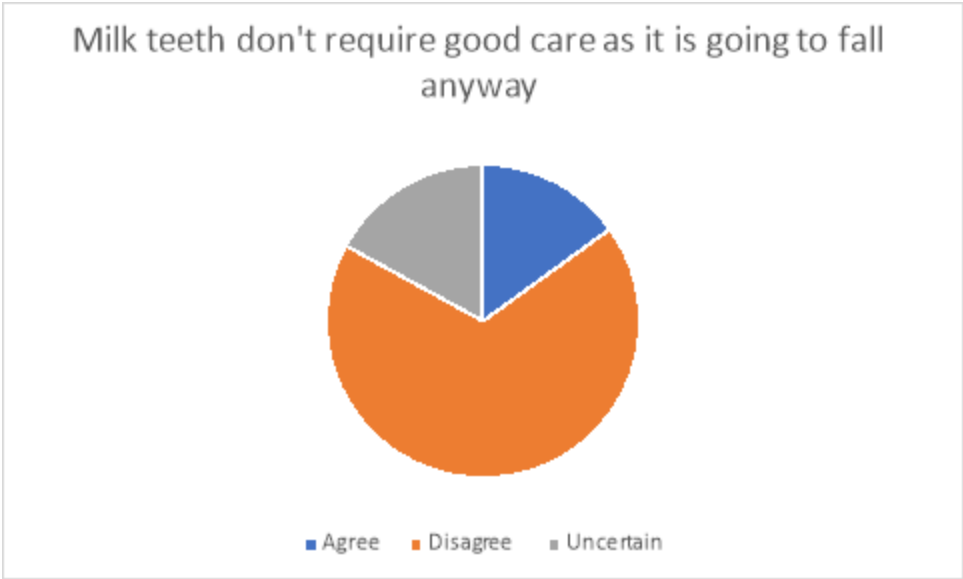


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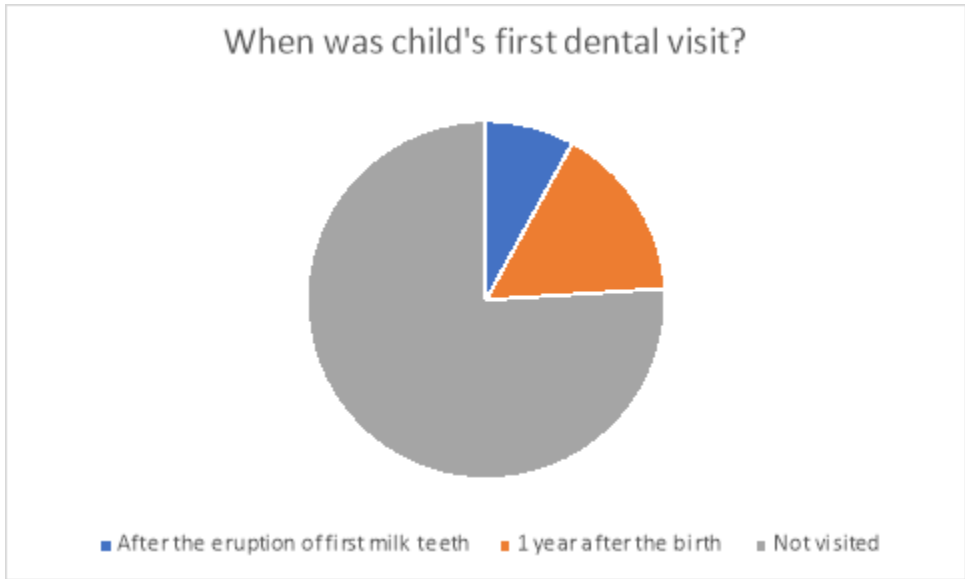


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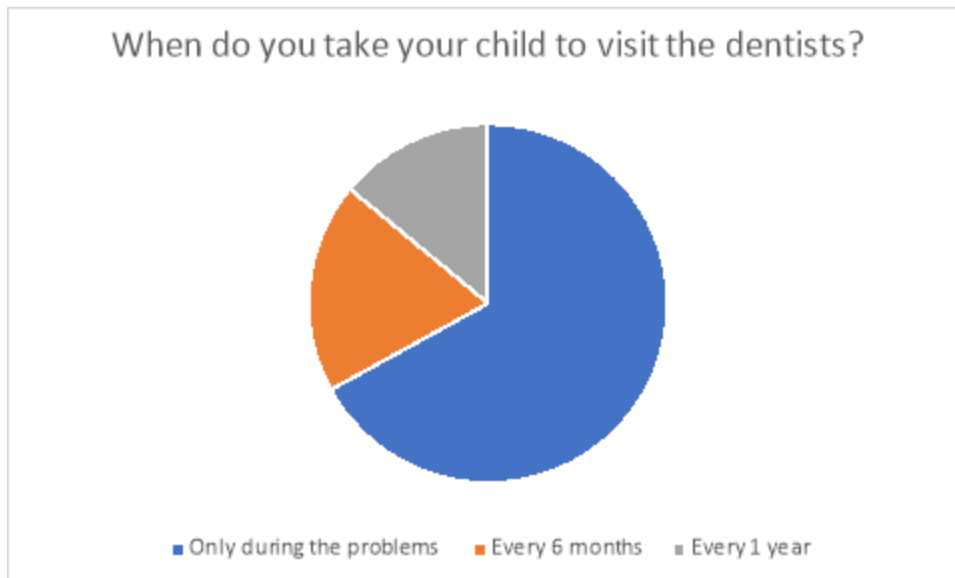


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IV. DISCUSSION:

The results of this cross sectional study on children oral health provide a unique opportunity to analyse the knowledge, attitude and practice of parents.

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTS ABOUT CHILD ORAL HEALTH:

The National Oral Health Survey And Flouride mapping found a high prevalence caries in children particularly in India with 51.9%. This has been associated with low level of awareness among mothers, poor oral hygiene and consumption of cariogenic diet.(11,12). In the present study,82% of parents considered that dental caries is the most common dental disease in the child, 10% of parents considered that discolouration of teeth is the most common dental disease in the child. Lin et al (13), Pradeep kumar et al (14,23) reported that parents had good knowledge about diet and dietary practice for preventing dental caries. In the present study, 36% of parents reported that restricting sweets can prevent tooth decay, 21% of parents reported that proper tooth brushing can prevent tooth decay, 9% of parents reported that regular visit to dentist can prevent tooth decay, 32% of parents reported that restricting sweets, proper tooth brushing, and regular visit to dentist can prevent tooth decay and 2% of parents don't know about the prevention of caries. In this present study, majority of parents (51%) don't know about the number of milk teeth in a child, 27% of parents reported that 10 milk teeth are there in child, 19% of parents reported that 12 milk teeth are there in a child, and 3% of parents reported that 20 milk teeth are there in a child.

ATTITUDE OF PARENTS ABOUT CHILD ORAL HEALTH:

According to Kadaluru et al, majority of parents are visiting only during problems, and the other reasons for not visiting routine check up include fear from white coat, and lack of need for routine check up.(15). In the present study, 44% of parents had an opinion that it is necessary to take the child for routine check up, which was similar to studies done by Moulana et al., (16), Chan et al.,(17) Nagarajappa et al.,(18) Talekar et al.,(19) and Pasareanu et al.,(20). Thus, frequent dental visit (atleast once every 6 months) are very crucial to reinforce good oral health habits and knowledge among parents which are passed on to children. In the present study, majority of parents (80%) agreed that cleaning of child's teeth should be done by mothers. 11% of parents were uncertain and 9% of parents disagreed that the cleaning of child's teeth should be done by mothers. Mother's self care behaviour has a clear positive influence on their children's brushing behaviour and on their dental health. (21). In this present study, 37% of parents disagreed that it is necessary to clean the child's teeth after every meal and 29% of parents were uncertain. Most people considered that primary teeth are not important because they are going to fall.(22). In this present study, majority (68%) of parents disagreed that milk teeth don't require good care as it is going to fall anyway, 15% of parents agreed that milk teeth don't require good care as it is going to fall anyway and 17% of parents were uncertain.

PRACTICES OF PARENTS ABOUT CHILD ORAL HEALTH:

In this present study, 57% of parents reported that their child brush once a day and only 43% of parents reported that their child brush twice a day. 83% of parents reported that tooth paste are used to clean their child teeth, and 17% of parents reported that tooth powder are used to clean their child teeth. 66% of parents will change the brush once the bristles fray out, 31% of parents will change the bristles every 2-3 months and 3% of parents will change once in a month. 92% of parents used tooth brush for cleaning their child teeth and only 8%

of parents used finger for cleaning their child teeth. This was similar to the studies done by Chan et al.,(17)Moulana et al.,(18), Pasareanu et al.,(20).In this present study, 55% of parents don't know about the commencement of child's teeth, 39% of parents commenced after 1 year and 6% of parents commenced after 1 year.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concluded the knowledge, attitude and practice of parents about child oral health in Chennai is moderate.Rigorous awareness programmes should be initiated to further improve the status of oral health.

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