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THE STATE OF ORAL HYGIENE AMONG STUDENTS AND WAYS TO IMPROVE IT

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Abstract. This study was devoted to the study of oral hygiene knowledge, daily hygiene habits, nutritional characteristics and attitude towards preventive dental care among students. The study involved 152 students. Data were collected through an anonymous online survey on the Google Forms platform. The results showed that students had a relatively high level of theoretical knowledge of oral hygiene, but there were shortcomings in the full implementation of some preventive habits in practice. The results of the study indicate the need to strengthen preventive and educational activities on oral hygiene among students.

Key words: oral hygiene, students, dental prevention, tooth cleaning, flossing, fluoride, caries, oral health.

TALABALAR O‘RTASIDA OG‘IZ BO‘SHLIG‘I GIGIENASI HOLATI VA UNI YAXSHILASH YO‘LLARI

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqot talabalar o‘rtasida og‘iz bo‘shlig‘i gigienasiga oid bilimlar, kundalik gigienik odatlar, ovqatlanish xususiyatlari va profilaktik stomatologik yordamga munosabatni o‘rganishga bag‘ishlangan. Tadqiqotda 152 nafar talaba ishtirok etdi. Ma’lumotlar anonim onlayn so‘rovnoma orqali Google Forms platformasida yig‘ildi. Natijalar talabalarning og‘iz bo‘shlig‘i gigienasi bo‘yicha nazariy bilimlari nisbatan yuqori darajada ekanini, biroq ayrim profilaktik odatlarni amaliyotda to‘liq qo‘llashda kamchiliklar mavjudligini ko‘rsatdi. Tadqiqot natijalari talabalar orasida og‘iz bo‘shlig‘i gigienasi bo‘yicha profilaktik-ta’limiy tadbirlarni kuchaytirish zarurligini ko‘rsatadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: og‘iz bo‘shlig‘i gigienasi, talabalar, stomatologik profilaktika, tish tozalash, tish ipidan foydalanish, ftor, karies, og‘iz salomatligi.

СОСТОЯНИЕ ГИГИЕНЫ ПОЛОСТИ РТА У СТУДЕНТОВ И ПУТИ ЕЕ УЛУЧШЕНИЯ

Аннотация. Данное исследование было проведено с целью изучения уровня знаний студентов о гигиене полости рта, их повседневных гигиенических и пищевых привычек, а также отношения к профилактике стоматологических заболеваний. В исследовании приняли участие 152 студента. Сбор данных осуществлялся посредством анонимного онлайн-опроса на платформе Google Forms. Результаты показали, что студенты обладают

относительно высоким уровнем теоретических знаний в области гигиены полости рта, однако на практике наблюдаются недостатки в соблюдении некоторых профилактических мер. Полученные данные указывают на необходимость усиления профилактической и просветительской работы среди студентов по вопросам гигиены полости рта.

Ключевые слова: гигиена полости рта, студенты, профилактика стоматологических заболеваний, чистка зубов, использование зубной нити, фториды, кариес, здоровье полости рта.

Background. Oral health is an important component of overall health and quality of life. According to the World Health Organization, most oral diseases are preventable, and modifiable factors such as inadequate oral hygiene, high sugar consumption, and insufficient exposure to fluoride play an important role in their development [1].

Knowledge of oral health does not necessarily mean that individuals apply this knowledge correctly and consistently in daily life. Therefore, assessing both students' knowledge and their actual oral hygiene habits is important from the perspective of preventive dentistry.

Oral hygiene habits established during the student years may influence lifestyle later in life. It is therefore important to assess oral hygiene among young people, identify existing shortcomings, and develop preventive measures to address them.

Study aim: To assess students' knowledge of oral hygiene and their daily oral hygiene habits, identify existing shortcomings, and develop preventive recommendations to improve oral hygiene.

Study objectives:

1. To examine the frequency and duration of toothbrushing among students.
2. To assess toothbrushing techniques and patterns of oral hygiene product use.
3. To identify discrepancies between oral hygiene knowledge and actual practices.
4. To develop practical recommendations for improving oral hygiene based on the problems identified.

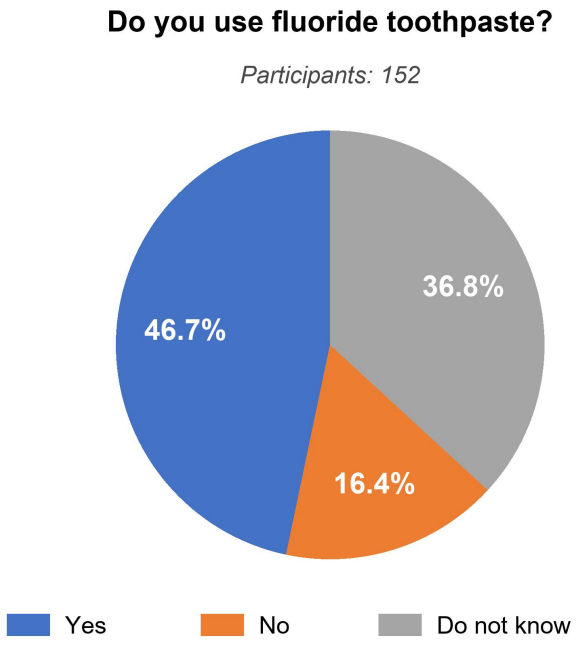
Materials and methods. A total of 152 students participated in the study. Data were collected through an anonymous online questionnaire using Google Forms. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data were expressed as frequencies (n) and percentages (%). Percentages were calculated based on the total sample of 152 respondents.

Results. Analysis of toothbrushing frequency showed that 107 students (70.4%) brushed their teeth twice daily, 35 (23.0%) once daily, and 10 (6.6%) three or more times daily.

When choosing toothpaste, 97 students (63.8%) identified a dentist's recommendation as their main criterion. Brand was considered an important factor by 24 students (15.8%), fluoride content by 17 (11.2%), and taste or smell by 6 (3.9%). Advertising and price were each identified as important factors by 4 students (2.6%).

Regarding the use of fluoride toothpaste, 71 students (46.7%) answered "yes," while 25 (16.4%) reported that they did not use it. Notably, 56 students (36.8%) did not know whether their toothpaste contained fluoride (Figure 1).

Figure 1.



Analysis of dietary habits showed that 43 students (28.3%) consumed sweets several times a day and 26 (17.1%) once a day. Sweets were consumed several times a week by 39 students (25.7%) and rarely by 44 (28.9%).

Analysis of the frequency of sugar-sweetened carbonated beverage consumption showed that 47.4% of students consumed these beverages daily, 17.1% once a week, and 28.3% rarely, while 7.2% did not consume them at all.

Regarding dental attendance, 95 students (62.5%) reported having last visited a dentist within the previous 6 months. Twelve students (7.9%) had last visited a dentist 6–12 months previously, 17 (11.2%) 1–2 years previously, and 6 (3.9%) more than 2 years previously. Twenty-two students (14.5%) could not recall when they had last visited a dentist.

When assessing their own oral hygiene, 82 students (53.9%) rated it as “good,” 35 (23.0%) as “very good,” and 31 (20.4%) as “satisfactory.” Four students (2.6%) were unable to assess their oral hygiene.

Conclusions.

1. The participating students were found to have a generally high level of theoretical knowledge about oral hygiene: 70.4% were aware of the recommendation to brush their teeth at least twice daily.

2. Although 46.7% of students were aware of the importance of fluoride in preventing dental caries, 36.8% did not know whether their toothpaste contained fluoride. This indicates a need for targeted health education on toothpaste selection.

3. The finding that 47.4% of students consumed sugar-sweetened carbonated beverages daily indicates a need to improve dietary habits and strengthen education on dental caries prevention.

4. Although most students acknowledged the need for preventive dental check-ups, they primarily sought dental care when they experienced pain. Translating knowledge of prevention into actual behavior is therefore an important priority.

Practical recommendations. Based on the study findings, the following preventive measures are recommended for students:

- ✓ organize brief practical training sessions on oral hygiene;
- ✓ demonstrate proper toothbrushing techniques and assess students' skills;
- ✓ provide education on selecting fluoride toothpaste and reading the information on its packaging;
- ✓ distribute educational materials on the effects of excessive consumption of sugary products, particularly sugar-sweetened carbonated beverages, on oral health;
- ✓ promote the habit of visiting a dentist for preventive care as well as when pain occurs;
- ✓ organize regular oral health education activities in educational institutions.

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