



ORAL HEALTH; WHAT IS ORAL HEALTH IN LAYMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

1. FCPS Orthodontics,
Assistant Professor
de'Montmorency College of
Dentistry Lahore
2. BDS
Dental Surgeon
DHQ Hospital, Sheikhpura
3. BDS, BSc
PG Trainee
Operative Dentistry
de'Montmorency College of
Dentistry Lahore
4. BDS
de'Montmorency College of
Dentistry Lahore
5. BDS
PG Trainee
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
de'Montmorency College of
Dentistry Lahore

Correspondence Address:

Dr. Sadaf Zahid
Dental Surgeon
DHQ Hospital, Sheikhpura
sadafazahid73@yahoo.com

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Muhammad Ilyas¹, Sadaf Zahid², Anam Rafiq³, Maham Bilal⁴, Narmeen Ishaq⁵

ABSTRACT... Introduction: Oral health is considered as being free from any kind of oral disease. **Objectives:** To explore the LAYMAN'S PERSPECTIVE regarding oral health, his awareness about oral diseases. To examine their attitude and beliefs regarding the maintenance of oral health. **Study Design:** We conducted mixed study on educated and uneducated people. **Study Period:** 01 May, 2016 to 01 May, 2017 **Study Place:** Punjab dental hospital, Lahore. **Material & Methods:** Qualitative method was used to collect knowledge and perspective of uneducated people. Quantitative method was used to collect data from educated people. We interviewed uneducated people in different places of Lahore and questionnaires were filled by educated people. **Results:** 58% of educated people and majority of uneducated people think they should visit dentist only at the time of need. 73% educated people said bleeding gums are indicative of oral disease, while majority of uneducated people said it does not indicate oral disease. Educated people were somewhat more aware of oral health and oral disease while uneducated people were unaware of even maintenance of oral health and its importance. **Conclusion:** Education makes the difference. Educated people have more awareness about oral health. Still awareness is needed a lot.

Key words: Oral Health, Oral hygiene, Oral diseases, Awareness of oral health, Perceptions, Dentistry

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INTRODUCTION

“Oral Health is being free from chronic mouth and facial pain, oral and throat cancer, oral sores, birth defects, periodontal diseases, decay and tooth loss and other diseases or disorders that affect oral cavity”.¹⁻³ Oral health generally means being free from any kind of oral disease “A SOUND ORAL CAVITY”.⁴ Good oral health is considered as having sound teeth, non bleeding gums without periodontal pockets and inflammation; free of infection, pain, xerostomia, halitosis and sensitivity, being free from any type of facial abnormality.⁵ Good oral health is an integral part of general health and well-being.⁶⁻⁸ Poor oral health can affect you physically and psychologically. It can also affect the taste of food, the type of food that you are able to eat and your feelings of social well-being.⁹ Early assimilation of good oral hygiene into general hygiene practices promotes better overall oral health and general health.¹⁰⁻¹²

Good oral health is subjective.

Oral health means more than good teeth; it is integral to general health, is essential for wellbeing and is a determinant of quality of life.¹³⁻¹⁵ The main objective of our research was to explore the LAYMAN'S PERSPECTIVE regarding oral health, his awareness about oral diseases and to examine their attitude and beliefs regarding the maintenance of oral health.

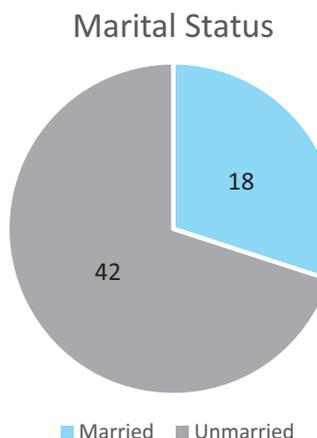
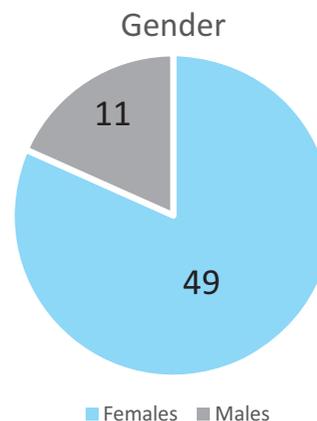
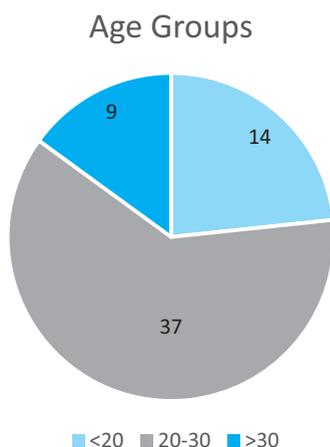
MATERIALS AND METHODS

It was a mixed study. Non probability purposive sampling technique¹⁶ was used. Self administered close ended questionnaires were given to educated people. They were in English, comprising of 18 questions. Respondents were of different age groups, gender and occupations. Students of different institutions were the main focus. Total 60 questionnaires were given.

Purpose was to know the perception and knowledge of common people regarding oral health. Highly flexible face to face 60 interviews were taken from less educated or uneducated people. Urdu and Punjabi were the languages used. These were taken till the saturation point was reached, i.e. no more information could be gathered from the new interviews. These were noted down simultaneously word to word. Raw data was analyzed. Purpose was to extract a concise, more meaningful and relevant information from an extensive, less meaningful, raw data in order to formulate the results. The transcript data of the interviews was reviewed several times and meaningful information was extracted out. Separate information was given a separate code. In our analysis the codes were new questions assembled from the available data. These questions were then compared with the questions of our questionnaires and similar questions were separated and made the part of our initial codes. The data was again reviewed to avoid any error. Codes related to similar topics were higher level headings. Each category was reviewed and compared with the raw data to check the relevance of information collected. Finally all inter related categories were reviewed, themes were identified and the categories were sorted out into these major themes. Each theme was concise, meaningful, precise, providing the complete understanding of the “big picture.”

RESULTS

Demographics of Educated People:



All uneducated people were more than 30 years of age and they were married. Both males and females were randomly interviewed.

Perception of educated people about oral health

How often a dentist should be visited?	
At the time of need	58.33%
once a year	20%
Twice a year	21.67%

How often we should brush our teeth?	
Once a day	23.33%
Twice a day	76.67%
Twice a week	0%

Do you think bleeding during brushing is normal?	
Yes	5%
No	73.33%
May be	21.67%

According to you which material is best for cleansing oral cavity?	
Tooth paste	65%
Tooth powder	10%
Mouth wash	25%

According to you what is included in oral health?	
Health of teeth and gums	20%
Health of teeth gums and tongue	25%
Health of soft and hard tissue of entire oral cavity	55%

Do you think bad mouth odour is indication of oral disease?	
Yes	58%
No	8.33%
May be	33.33%

Do you think eating sugary food more can affect your oral health?	
Yes	85%
No	6.67%
May be	8.33%

Do you think acidic foods/carbonated drinks have bad impact on dental health?	
Yes	78.33%
No	10%
May be	11.67%

Do you think irregularly aligned teeth are normal and not require any treatment?	
Yes	20%
No	61.67%
May be	18.33%

What is the normal colour of gums according to you?	
Reddish Pink	61.67%
Purplish Pink	5%
Coral Pink	33.33%

Do you think swollen gums are normal?	
Yes	3.33%
No	95%
May be	1.67%

Do you think discolored tooth can be indicative of disease?	
Yes	48.33%
No	21.67%
May be	30%

Do you think gap/space increasing recently between your teeth is normal phenomena?	
Yes	21.67%
No	65%
May be	13.33%

Do you think mobile/loose teeth are indicative of disease?	
Yes	60%
No	11.67%
May be	21.67%

Do you think discomfort while taking hot, cold, sour and sweet food is normal?	
Yes	10%
No	83.33%
May be	6.67%

According to you what is the best method of cleansing teeth?	
Tooth brush	38.33%
Miswak	58.33%
Finger	3.33%

Do you think smoking can affect your oral health?	
Yes	95%
No	1.67%
May be	3.33%

Do you think chewing betel nuts, tobacco, snuff (Naswar) can cause oral diseases?	
Yes	93.33%
No	3.33%
May be	3.33%

Perception of uneducated people about oral health

Theme 1: Common perception and understanding of oral health and disease!

We asked people what is oral health and what is included in it? People said they did not know what oral health is, but they think it had something to do with teeth only. Majority considered sensitivity as a severe thing and did not know about others while some did consider gum's issues as sign of disease. About the perspective of oral health people think shiny white properly aligned teeth without pain and no bad breath. People think teeth are very important functionally & aesthetically. They think oral health includes teeth only.

Theme 2: Attitude towards the maintenance of good oral health!

In the answer of the best method of cleansing the teeth, people said tooth paste according to advertisements or any random affordable one would do the job. Some considered miswak the best and some mentioned dandasa as well. Rinsing is important according to everyone.

People considered brushing sufficient. In the answer of, effects of diet on oral health? Only few mentioned the role of diet. Others said only oral hygiene is important. Majority said only in case of pain and others said, we prefer home remedies instead. Majority said mostly because of lack of time or cost. Although some said it was not necessary at all.

DISCUSSION

We asked what is oral health and what is included in oral health. 55% educated people answered correctly while almost all uneducated people were unaware of oral health. Most of the uneducated people said oral health includes health of teeth only. Both educated and uneducated people said sensitivity is not a normal phenomenon. 73% educated people said bleeding gums are indicative of oral disease, while majority of uneducated people said it does not indicate oral disease. Mostly uneducated people think oral health includes teeth only. Mostly uneducated people think if you can eat well then you have good oral health. They include mastication only to describe oral health. We noticed esthetics is important according to both educated and uneducated people. 58% of educated people said miswak is the best method for cleaning of teeth. 78% of educated people said carbonated drinks or acidic food have bad impact on oral health. 85% said consumption of excess sugary food can be detrimental to oral health. While majority of uneducated people were unaware of the impact of carbonated drinks and sugary food on oral health. 58% of educated people said we should visit a dentist only at the time of need. This is comparable with the study conducted in India where 46% said we should visit a dentist at the time of need.¹⁷ Majority of uneducated people said we should visit a dentist only at the time of pain or need. 77% educated people said we should brush our teeth twice a day. This percentage is much higher than the percentage of Indian research.

This study showed that people have less awareness about oral health, mostly uneducated. Either educated or uneducated there were many false common believes about oral hygiene like

brushing frequency, dental checkup etc. There is immense need of spreading awareness among uneducated people. Although educated people also have false believes but their ratio is less than uneducated people, but still need awareness. This study highlighted the need of prevailing awareness regarding oral health both at personal level as well as at community level. The patients can be educated and guided about maintaining good oral health at the very first visit to a dentist. Patients should be guided about brushing time, frequency, techniques and flossing.

Healthy food plays a vital role in maintenance of good oral health. Patients must be made aware of consequences of high sugar consumption on oral health and benefits of fibrous food (fruits and raw vegetables) should also be addressed in detail. At community level they ought to teach what the oral health is and how to maintain the good oral health.¹⁸ This can be done through media, pamphlets and health education programs.

To prevent dental diseases like caries water fluoridation in schools and at community level should be done in the areas where fluoride contents are less than recommended value. Pit and fissure sealants should also use as a preventive measure to minimize caries risk. Dental health camps should be organized in remote areas where people don't have facilities of dental treatment. People should be made aware about health hazards of chewing tobacco, pan, betel nuts, and cigarette and their long term effects on oral health.

CONCLUSION

Our mixed study revealed that uneducated people were not much aware of oral health. While educated people have enough awareness. Uneducated people have concerns regarding teeth only.

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AUTHORSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION DECLARATION

Sr. #	Author-s Full Name	Contribution to the paper	Author=s Signature
1	Dr. Muhammad Ilyas	Conception, design and final drafting of manuscript.	
2	Dr. Sadaf Zahid	Article writing, research designing and interpretation of data.	
3	Dr. Anam Rafiq	Conception, Data collection and literature review.	
4	Dr. Maham Bilal	Conception, Data collection and literature review.	
5	Dr. Narmeen Ishaq	Provided substantial help in various aspects	