



AWARENESS ON IMPACT OF DIET AND NUTRITION ON DENTAL HYGIENE IN RURAL AMALAPURAM.

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ABSTRACT

Background: The saying “You are what you eat” holds particularly true for oral health. Despite this, many people, especially in rural areas, remain unaware of how their diet directly affects their teeth and gums. High sugar consumption, acidic foods, and poor hydration contribute to dental issues like cavities, gum disease, and enamel erosion. This study aims to assess the level of awareness among people in rural Amalapuram regarding the impact of diet and nutrition on oral health. **Methods:** A retrospective study was conducted among 200 patients visiting Area Hospital, PHCs, and CHCs near Amalapuram between February 2024 and February 2025. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire. Ethical approval was obtained, and the collected data were analyzed using BM SPSS Software. **Results:** 60% of participants believed diet plays a role in oral health, while 25% were unsure and 15% disagreed. 66.7% consumed sugary foods multiple times a week, with 16.7% consuming them daily. While 62.5% drank adequate water (6-8 glasses daily), 15% drank insufficient amounts. Only 15% brushed their teeth after consuming sugary or acidic foods, and 65% never did. 75% expressed interest in learning more about how diet affects their dental health. **Conclusion:** While many people recognize that their diet impacts oral health, few take action to change their habits. The findings highlight the urgent need for better education on the role of nutrition in dental hygiene. Simple changes—such as reducing sugar intake, drinking more water, and brushing after meals—can have a lasting impact. Awareness programs and dietary guidance can play a crucial role in improving oral health in rural communities.

KEYWORDS : Oral health, diet, nutrition, dental hygiene, awareness, rural communities of Amalapuram

INTRODUCTION

While we might frequently come across phrases such as “You are what you eat,” have you paid any thought to how this impacts your teeth and gums? The meals we consume on a daily basis make an impact on our oral hygiene. Sugary snacks, drinks with high acidity levels, and packaged food may taste great, but they can cause tooth decay, gum disease, and softening of the teeth over time. On the positive side, consuming foods loaded with important vitamins such as calcium, vitamin D, and phosphorus keeps both our gums and teeth healthy, thereby preventing muscle deterioration. More than ever, spreading awareness about the relationship between nutrition, diet, and oral hygiene is critical. Poor eating habits cause many dental problems, which are easily avoidable. This publication aims to inform

readers about how various nutrients support dental health, the threats certain foods pose, and simple ways to maintain a healthy smile. After all, a great smile starts with great nutrition!

Aim

The aim of this research is to assess awareness about the impact of diet and nutrition on dental hygiene. The objectives include:

1. Educating patients on how their food choices impact their oral health.
2. Highlighting the importance of a balanced diet in preventing dental issues such as cavities, gum diseases, and enamel erosion.
3. Providing dietary recommendations for maintaining dental health.
4. Raising awareness about the effects of poor nutrition on oral health.
5. Encouraging healthy dietary habits across all age groups.

Methodology

The study was a retrospective analysis involving

200 patients who visited Area Hospital, PHCs, and CHCs near Amalapuram between February 2024 and February 2025.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Patients of all age groups and genders who visited the mentioned hospitals.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Patients unwilling to provide consent.
- Patients unable to communicate.

Data Collection Procedure:

- Informed consent was obtained from participants.
- Data was collected through face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire.

Confidentiality:

- Participants' details were kept confidential; only summary results were used.

Ethical Considerations:

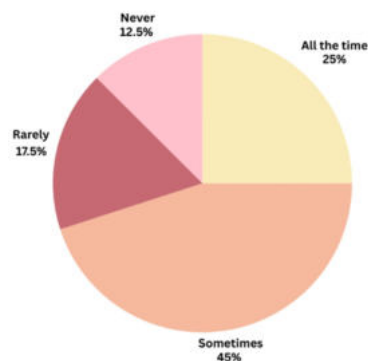
- Institutional ethics committee approval was obtained.

Data Analysis:

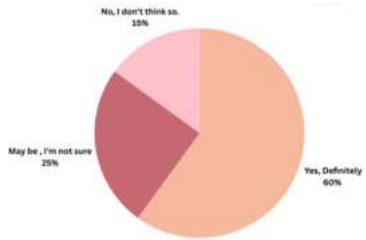
- Data was entered into Microsoft Excel 2016 and analyzed using BM SPSS Software.

RESULTS

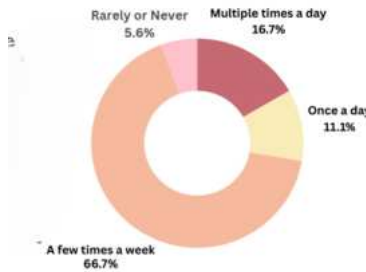
The study involved 200 participants, and the key findings are summarized below:



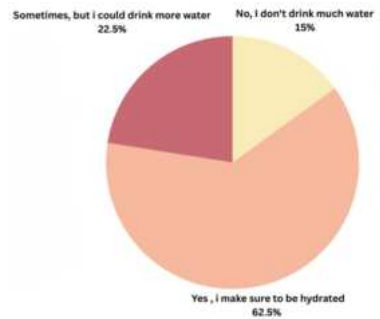
- 1) 45% sometimes think about how diet affects their teeth, 25% regularly consider it, 17.5% rarely think about it, and 12.5% never do.



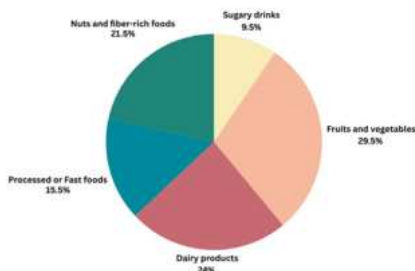
- 2) 60% believe diet affects oral health, 25% are unsure, and 15% do not believe there is any impact.



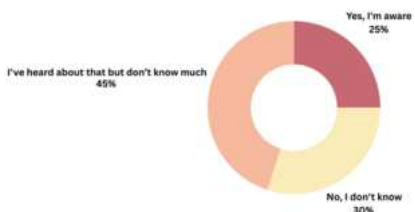
- 3) 66.7% consume sugary items a few times a week, 16.7% multiple times daily, 11.1% once a day, and 5.6% rarely or never.



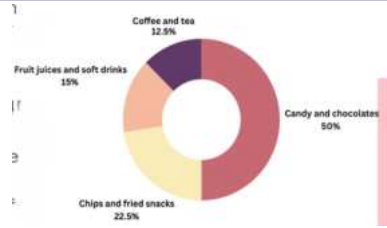
- 4) 62.5% drink 6-8 glasses of water daily, 22.5% drink sometimes, and 15% do not drink much water.



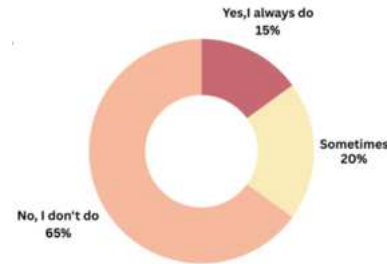
- 5) 29.5% regularly consume fruits and vegetables, 24% consume dairy products, 21.5% eat nuts and fiber-rich foods, 15.5% eat fast food, and 9.5% consume sugary drinks.



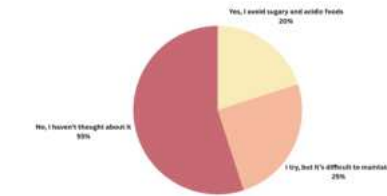
- 6) 25% are fully aware that acidic foods weaken enamel, 45% have heard of it but lack details, and 30% are unaware.



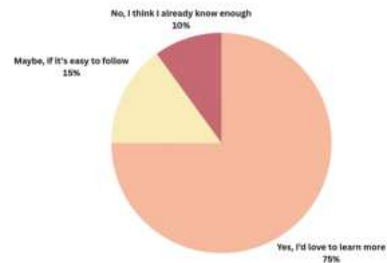
- 7) 50% believe candy and chocolates are the worst for teeth, 22.5% blame chips and fried snacks, 15% blame fruit juices and soft drinks, and 12.5% blame coffee and tea.



- 8) 15% brush their teeth after consuming sugary or acidic foods, 20% sometimes brush, and 65% do not brush.



- 9) 20% have changed their diet for better oral health, 25% try but struggle, and 55% have not considered dietary changes.



- 10) 75% want more information about how diet affects dental health.

DISCUSSION

The study conducted in rural Amalapuram highlights that while people are aware of diet's impact on oral health, many do not take necessary actions. High sugar intake, insufficient water consumption, and a lack of awareness about acidic foods are common issues. However, the encouraging sign is that most respondents are willing to learn more about how diet influences dental health.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that while awareness is growing, action is still lacking. If people had better access to simple and practical information, they might make better choices. Encouraging small changes—like drinking more water, reducing sugar intake, and brushing after meals—could lead to healthier smiles for many.

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