



“PARENTAL KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN AGED 7 TO 12 YRS REGARDING PIT AND FISSURE THERAPY. A SURVEY.”

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ABSTRACT

Background: Pit and fissure sealants are a preventive modality wherein a thin plastic material is introduced into pit and fissures of caries susceptible teeth, forming a protective layer cutting access of caries producing bacteria from their sources of nutrients. It helps to prevent caries in young children especially in primary and permanent molars. Parental knowledge and attitude towards pit and fissure sealant can help make significant gains in caries reduction and it is necessary to educate and inform the public. **Aim:** the aim of this study was to assess the knowledge and practice of parents of school children in modinagar towards need and importance of pit and fissure sealant application for their children. **Materials and methods:** a cross sectional study was carried out among parents of school going children aged 7 to 12 years using a close ended questionnaire regarding their knowledge and attitude towards use of pit and fissure sealants. Association with gender and educational qualification of parents was established using chi-square test. **Results:** it was found that the knowledge and practice of pit and fissure sealants was very low in majority of parents. It was also observed that parents who were highly educated had frequent visits to dentists and henceforth were more aware about the sealants, also female parents had better knowledge compared to males. **Conclusion:** it was concluded by this study that awareness about benefits of sealant application to children in preventing caries and preserving dentition at low costs should be emphasized using personalized counselling by dentists, mass media, and school oral health programs.

KEYWORDS : Caries, children, pit and fissure sealants, prevention.

INTRODUCTION

According to WHO caries is defined as “localized posteruptive pathological process of external origin involving softening of the hard tooth tissue and proceeding to cavity formation”. Dental caries can occur at any age after teeth erupt into the oral cavity, but the individuals at highest risk are children^[1]. Dental-related illness causes more than 51 million school hours to be lost per year that is approximately 3.1 days per year for children ages 5 to 17^[2,3]. Fissure sealants are highly effective in the prevention of pit and fissure caries and the management of the carious lesion^[4,7]. Parents play an important role in ensuring the wellbeing and achieving the best oral health status of children^[8]. A Parent's knowledge and attitude have a great impact on maintaining and improving the child's oral health^[9]. Keeping these points in mind a questionnaire based research was conducted among parents of school going children of modinagar to evaluate their knowledge and practice of pit and fissure sealant use in their children.

AIM: this study was carried out to

- 1) assess the knowledge of parents of school going children in the age group 7 to 12 years towards sealant application for their children.
- 2) To recommend further strategies to improve the practice of sealant application in children to preserve the dentition by using a cost effective and pain free alternative.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

a self administered questionnaire was distributed to parents of 100 children who were enrolled in a high school in modinagar from grades third to seventh of age 7 to 12 years. This is also the age for eruption of permanent molars and these teeth are most susceptible to caries. The questions consisted of parental age, gender, educational qualification, knowledge regarding pit and fissure sealants and practice of sealant application among children.

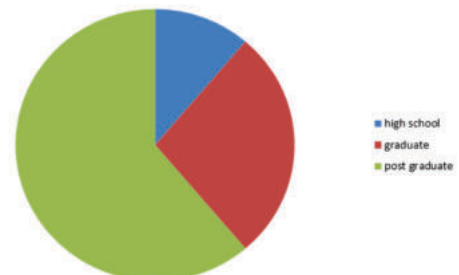
RESULTS:

it was observed that about 70% of the parents had very low knowledge about pit and fissures, though knowledge was significantly more in academically educated parents. Mothers were more aware about term pit and fissure sealants and had positive approach towards preventing caries than fathers.

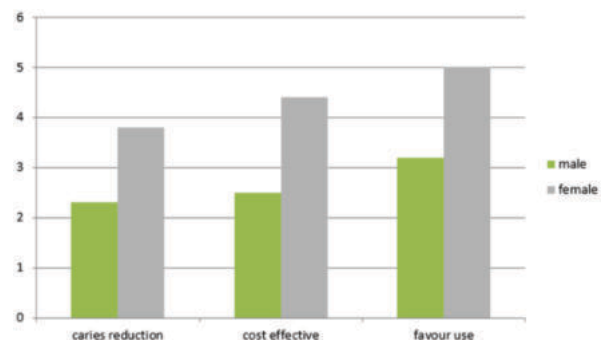
DISCUSSION:

Dental caries is a preventable disease in children, for those receiving preventive dental treatment. Dental decay can be prevented by a change in the dietary habits and increasing the tooth resistance against acid attack by coating the tooth surface with a sealing material which was agreed by the majority of the parents. Sealant awareness was greater among respondents who reported having had previous

discussion of dental caries prevention with their dentists. In the present study, 70 percent parents had very less knowledge about pit and fissure sealants which is similar to a study conducted by Mafeni J O et al^[10] and Tahani B et al. Some of the authors reported parents with better knowledge like Lakshmanan L et al^[11] where 71% and Lang WP et al where 80% of parents were aware. Parental knowledge about sealants can go a long way in preventing caries in children and reduce the suffering of pain, preserve dentition and be cost effective. The inclusion of sealants into primary preventive programs is one way to address cost-effectively this movement toward better oral health.



Parental attitude on the basis of academic qualification towards sealant use in children



Attitude and knowledge towards pit and fissure sealants on the basis of parental gender.

CONCLUSION:

this study concluded that there is limited knowledge and practice about sealant placement in children. The awareness needs to be increased by use of mass media, school health education programs and individual counselling so that more and more parents are motivated towards preventive dentistry.

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