

Perception of Dental Visits among Jazan University Students, Saudi Arabia

Mona Awad Kami¹

¹Department of Preventive Dental sciences, Periodontics division, College Of Dentistry, Jazan University, Jazan, Saudi Arabia.

ABSTRACT

Background: regular dental check-ups is fundamental in preventing and detecting dental diseases. Majority of Saudi patients do not have the trend to visit dentist frequently and they go only for emergency treatment and mostly pain is the driving factor.

Aim: to evaluate the knowledge, beliefs and attitude of Jazan university students towards dental visits.

Materials and Methodology: This descriptive cross-sectional; questionnaire based survey was carried out to evaluate the perception of Jazan university Saudi students towards dental visits. 352 students participated, age range of 20-24 years old.

Results: The study revealed pain is the driving factor for most of the dental visits. 47.9%, their 1st visits complain was pain, 58% the driving factor for last visit is also pain. Although 29.1% occasionally visit dentist; 43% of them their last visit to dentist was 6 month ago. 47.6% were irregular visitors to dentist because they are afraid from dental needle and pain. 75% of the participants described their feeling at 1st visit to dentist to be anxious and afraid. Although 88% of the participants knew that regular dental check-ups is important but this knowledge was not practiced. Only 4.3% of the participants are driven to dental visit by dentist advice.

Conclusion: there are lack of knowledge, wrong beliefs and negligence of dental visits in our study participants. Dental professional and mass media are not playing their role to change the knowledge and beliefs of the population. **Recommendation:** dental professionals' media should be utilized spread knowledge of proper dental care.

Keywords: questionnaire, pain, dental visits

I. Introduction

Regular dental check-ups are fundamental in preventing and detecting dental diseases, showing a positive outcome over the conservation of a natural and functional dentition [1]. Majority of the population in developing countries do not have specific trends to visit doctors [2]. The need for regular dental check-ups, the use of floss, is not appreciated in many parts of the world. For example 50% of the American population visits the dentist annually and in Singapore only low percent did it. The American Dental Association (ADA) and other organizations recommended that adults thoroughly brush and floss their teeth at least once a day and get regular oral health check-ups [1]. Extending the intervals between checkup dental visits may lead to a greater chance of oral diseases progression without intervention, causing painful and/or irreversible damages to the dentition [3]. Educated people have better health condition and they used to have more regular and frequent dental visits [4]. The probability of visiting a dental clinic for a regular check-up increased among the literate and those who implement oral hygiene practices. Regular examinations help at early diagnosis of dental problems, prevent their deterioration and raises awareness of oral health [5]. Despite the free dental services accessible to Saudi citizens 54% of the participants seek only emergency treatment. This may be due to dissatisfaction with public services or lack of attentiveness and awareness. [6]. Lack of information, and financial difficulties were reasons for non-obedience with oral hygiene regimens [7]. The dentist, television, family, and friends were the most common sources of dental health information. Dentist was an influential source of preventive measures. However mass media was found to influence and encourage awareness in using dental care. Television is most effective and best source of information, as it is watched by all the family members [1]. It was reported that; those who have acquired good knowledge presented good oral health behavior. [8]. Patient satisfaction is part of oral health care delivery. Dental complaints made by patients may cause a great deal of anxiety and stress and might have inferences of the family and friends' [9]. A low education level was among the primary reasons for not seeking regular dental care and dental fear [10]. Dentistry like most medical fields that involve communication between the doctor and patients is a very intimate process. The patient-dentist relationship is an important factor and needs to be taken seriously. The quality of interpersonal care is important to patients. Acquaintance and perception of patient's preferences is essential for improving the quality of dental care [11]. Failure to fulfill patients' needs and prospect wear away the trust and consequently lead to patient negative behaviors toward dental profession. Patient's level of confidence in a

dentist governs whether that patient regularly go for oral healthcare[12]. The prevalence of dental anxiety has been documented in many countries worldwide. Avoidance of dental care, irregular dental attendance, and poor cooperation with care provider are considered the main outcomes of dental anxiety ([0].Dental pain was the reason for visiting the dentist and the people rarely seek an appointment for check-up[3], [13]. The reasons behind non visiting dentist was found by many studies to be explained in terms of the high cost of dental treatment , fear of pain and discomfort associated with dental procedure [14], fear of drilling and dental needle phobia [13]

II. Material And Methods

The study design was a cross-sectional survey using a self-administered, structured and pre-validated close ended questionnaire that evaluate the knowledge, beliefs and attitude of Jazan university students towards dental visits. Questionnaire was designed by a team of dental professionals after a thorough literature review. Questionnaire was prepared in English language and translated to Arabic language for the convenience of the study population. The questionnaire was designed to be comprehensible and was pretested on a group of ten students who were requested to complete the questionnaire. The pre-test focused on the student's ability to understand the vocabulary used in the questionnaire. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed randomly among Jazan university students kingdom of Saudi Arabia; total of 352 students participated and responded to the study. Participants are all college students with equal gender participation and age range of 20-24 years old. Exclusion criteria were medical and dental students, and those who refused to take part in the study. The study was carried out in the month of March-June 2015. Consent was obtained from all the individuals who participated in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were assured. Care was taken that students did not duplicate each other's answers by asking each one to answer separately maintaining some space between them. Assessment of patient's dental visit knowledge included items on the reasons for visiting dentist, reason for not visiting dentist, frequency of visiting dentist, time and driving factor and feeling at 1st dental visit, last dental visit time and driving factor, source of oral health information, idea about regular dental visit for checkup, sources of information about oral health. The completed questionnaire was collected and was subjected to statistical analysis. The data was analyzed using the statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 software. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the sample and responses of the questionnaire.

III. Results And Discussion

Dental visit driving factors: In our study 58.2% of the participants visited dentist only for treatment of pain which is similar to the result of Hind Al Johani 56.9% [3], and less than Sharma et al results 36% of the participants' pain is the reason for visiting. Only 21.4% of our study participants their dental visit is without complain, which was high compared to Sharma et al study results showed 12.46% visited for regular checkup. [14]

Last dental visit time and driving factor: 44.2% of the study population reported visiting a dentist during last 6 months, and 44.7% their last visit driving factor was pain. Only 4.3% are advised by dentists, this reflected that dental practitioners are not taking their role to influence and encourage awareness in using dental care (figure number 1).

Frequency of visiting the dentist: Our study participants 12% visited the dentist once or twice per year. This is similar Sharma et al results showed 12.5% visited for regular checkup. However 47.9% visit dentist when they have pain and 29.1% are occasional visitors [14]. The finding of ElBcheraoui et al 11.5% participants had visited a dental clinic for a routine check-up and (48.6%) for a complaint during the last year [5]. And inconsistent with the results of Hind Eljohani 24.8% visited twice per year or more [3]

Regular dental visits: 88.9% of the participants thought regular dental visit are important although surprisingly small percentage only (12%) used to visit dentist on regular basis; once or even twice per year figure (2).65% of our study participants thought oral health is as important as general health. This showed that the study participants acquired good knowledge, but this knowledge was not implemented into practice by acquiring regular dental visits; this reflect that there was a big gap between participants' knowledge and practice. Baseer MA et al 2012 results showed 92.5% agreed that regular dental visit was important, however more than 50% of his study participants showed a positive attitude toward necessity of regular visit to dentist[13]. But only 62.5% of Baseer MA et al 2016 participants agreed with the importance of regular dental visits [15].

Dental phobia, fear and anxiety: When participants are asked about how they felt at their dental appointment 28.5 % is extremely anxious & too much afraid & 45.9% are slightly afraid and 17.5% of the participants had a positive feeling. This is consistent with the results of Khalifa study of dental anxiety scores (27.5%) are extremely anxious [10].

Reasons for irregular dental visits: When participants were asked about why they are irregular visitors to dentists; half of them have dental injection phobia (47.6%), 10% afraid of dental drill and its sounds and, only

1.2% reported that; dental treatment is expensive, 23.1% because they did not have pain. While for Fatinstudy results only 14% are because of dental phobia and long waiting for governmental hospitals and high cost for private ones[7]. Baseer MA et alstudy concluded that fear of drilling was the main reason for avoiding or not visiting the dentist [13]. KhalifaKhalifa study conclude that the participants who are slightly anxious; some of them had a positive feeling after the first appointment[10]. However those who are extremely anxious were negative about dental appointment. Sharma et al reported30.39% non-visiting because of fear of pain and discomfort, (31.31%) high cost, (16.72%) lack of time [14]. Lack of information, and financial difficulties were, reasons for non-adherence with oral hygiene regimens (Fatinawartani 2009). Only 4.3% are advised by dentist [7].

IV. Conclusion

The findings of this study conclude that; there was lack of perception, awareness behavior towards dental visits and its role in preventing oral diseases. Dental professional should make every power to educate the public; the benefits and importance of regular dental visit. Intensive dental educational programs in schools, strong measures should be taken to reduce and eliminate dental treatment phobia, use all measures and new techniques to reduce dental anxiety and phobia. Formulate strategies to develop and implement programs to increase the awareness of oral health. These programs are needed to educate patients about the importance of visiting the dentist on a regular basis.

V. Figures And Tables

Table showing the percent for the study different variables:

1) Do you think regular dental checkup is important	Percent	2) Do you think oral health is as important as general health?	Percent
regular dental checkup is important	88.9%	Yes I think oral health is as important as general health	65%
regular dental treatment is not important	11.1%		26%
3) Frequency of visiting dentist	Percent	4) Dental visit driving factors	Percent
once or twice per year	12.0%	pain	58.2%
Occasionally	29.1%	not feeling good	11.1%
if I have pain	47.9%	nothing	21.4%
never visited dentist	11.1%		
5) How do you feel when you visit dentist	Percent	6) Reasons for irregular dental visits	percent
too much afraid	28.5%	afraid from dental drill and it's sounds	10.0%
Slightly or moderately afraid	45.9%	afraid from dental needle	47.6%
not afraid	17.1%	no nearby clinic	8.8%
no visit	6.3%	didn't have time	8.5%
		dental treatment is expensive	1.1%
		didn't have pain	22.8%
7) what is the driving factor for your last dental visit	Percent	8) time for your last dental visit	Percent
Pain	44.7%	before 6 month	43.0%
advised by friend or family member	15.7%	before 1-2 years	25.6%
Advised by dentist	4.3%	in the last 2-5 years	6.8%
Other	26.5%	more than 5 years ago	15.4%
no visit	5.7%		

Figure number (1) last dental visit driving factor

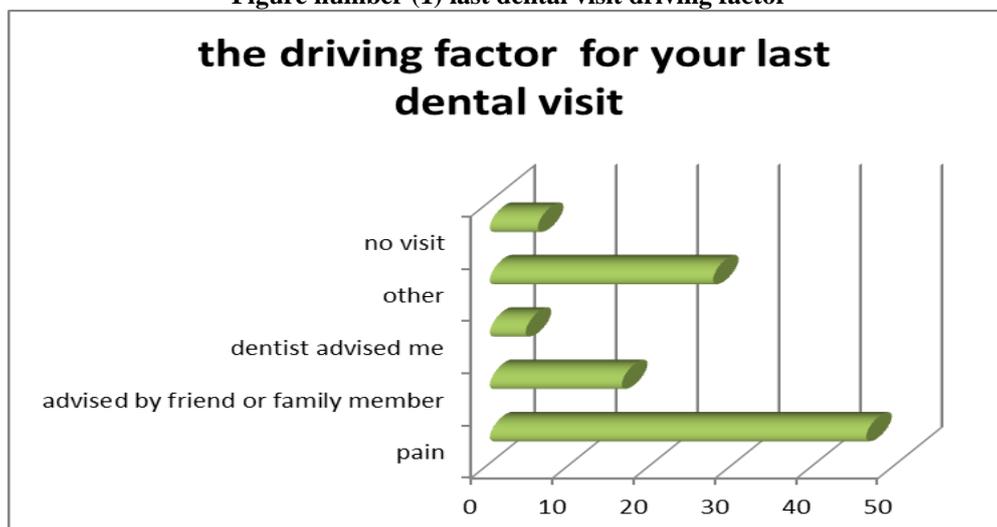


Figure no (2) percent of participants' regular dental checkup

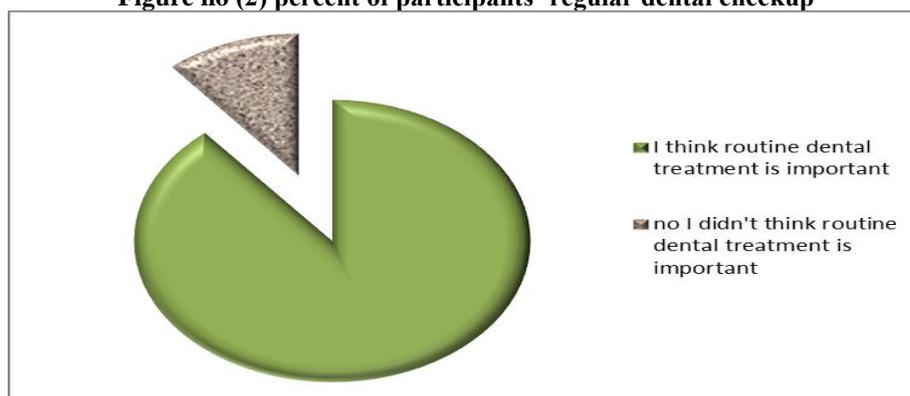
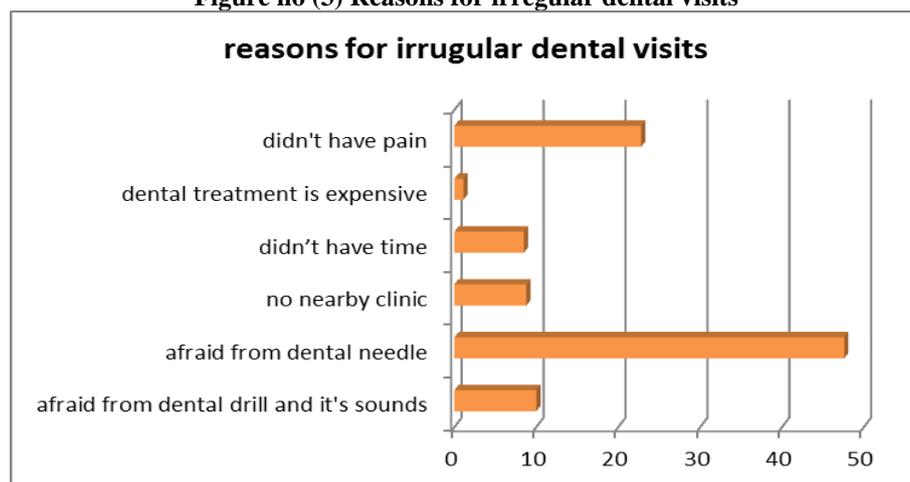


Figure no (3) Reasons for irregular dental visits



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