

AWARENESS OF VARIOUS DENTAL SPECIALITIES AMONG MEDICAL FRATERNITIES-A KAP SURVEY

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ABSTRACT: Aim: The aim of this study is to assess the awareness of various dental specialities among medical professionals.

Method: The study was conducted among medical professionals including UG and PG students from various institutes. A questionnaire was prepared in Google forms and sent to them. Families of dentists were excluded in this study.

Results: Out of 107 responses, on an average of 60-70 percent participants were aware of the specialities. Rests of them were not and it should be improved.

Conclusion: This Study Concluded That There Is Still A Lack Of Awareness Among Medical Professionals Regarding Dental Specialities.

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Dental Specialities, Medical Professionals

1. INTRODUCTION (ARIAL, BOLD, 11 FONT, LEFT ALIGNED, CAPS)

People in today's world are so health conscious that they are aware of the different medical specialities available through social media and peer groups. Despite of enormous advancements in the field of Dentistry, there is very limited knowledge among the people. Not only among the general public but also among the medical professionals.

There are some studies (1,2), it was evident that most of the people and some doctors were unaware of the various dental specialities. Although the medical fraternities had heard of some specialities, they did not understand the particular expertise of the subjects. (5) When we casually quizzed some medical professionals among our friends, we realised that many of them were not aware of all dental specialities. This revelation was the trigger point which set us to take into the survey. Our survey did reveal some startling facts about the awareness levels of all specialities. India has over 300 dental colleges and produced enormous specialists till date.

We wanted to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of the medical community on various specialities in dentistry. We did not include general public, as awareness in India is disproportionate.

(4) Understanding the attitude and perception of our medical colleagues was found to be more vital than to assess the knowledge of public. We wanted to know whom should we educate-the doctors or the public(3).

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This survey was conducted among medical professionals including UG's, PG's, Practitioners of various colleges/Institutes. The participants include 58.33% were Practitioners (PG) and 41.67% were MBBS Graduates. A questionnaire was prepared in Google forms and validated by the Professor of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Saveetha dental college. Ethical approval was obtained from SRB, Saveetha dental college. A simple random sampling was done and the questionnaire was sent to various medical professionals. None of them were forced to fill the form. As per Helsinki declaration, the guidelines were followed. 108 responses were received. SPSS version 20 was used for statistics. Mean, Percentage were measured.

III. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Family of dentists

The Questionnaire is as Follows

- Qualification?
1. MBBS student 2. PG student 3. Practitioner
- Have you ever been to a Dentist before?
1. Yes 2. No 3. May be
- When was your last visit to dentist?
1. 1 mon 2. 6 months 3. 1 year
- Are you aware of the specialities in dentistry?
1. Yes 2. No 3. Maybe
- How many specialities are there in dentistry in India?
1. 5 2. 7 3. 9
- Which surgeon would you expect to treat Cleftlip/cleftpalate?
1. Plastic surgeon 2. OMFS
- To treat facial bone fractures?
1. OMFS 3. Plastic surgeon
- To treat CA sinus?
1. ENT 2. OMFS
- For cosmetic surgeries of face?
1. OMFS 2. Plastic surgeon
- Do you call for a dentist opinion for TMJ problems?
1. Yes 2. No
- Delayed referral of dental treatments can lead to life threatening conditions?
1. Yes 2. No
- Have you ever referred any patients to a Dentist before?
1. Yes 2. No
- Do you think Dentists also admit patients for procedures under GA?
1. Yes 2. No
- Facial prosthesis can be done by?
1. Plastic surgeon 2. Prosthodontist
- Speciality which treat malaligned teeth?
1. Prosthodontics 2. Orthodontics
- Speciality which does Gums surgery?
1. OMFS 2. Periodontics
- Do you know that gum disease and diabetes are related?
1. Disagree 3. Strongly disagree
- Speciality to which medical practitioner refer cases with abscess in face?
1. General surgeon 2. OMFS

- Are you aware of the dental speciality for promoting community health services?
1.Yes 2.No

IV. RESULTS

The question are consisted of 19 questions and the responses received were 108. Figure 1 represents the Qualification of the partipants, where 58.33% were Practitioners (PG) and 41.67% were MBBS Graduates. Figure 2 represents the responses got for Certain questions. An average of 34.33 were aware of the speciality and the rest is not. Figure 3 represents awareness of certain diseases like TMJ problems, periodontitis as a risk of diabetis, Delayed dental treatment leads to life threatening conditions, and The department involved in Public health services, an average of 64.5% were aware of those questions and 35.5% were not.

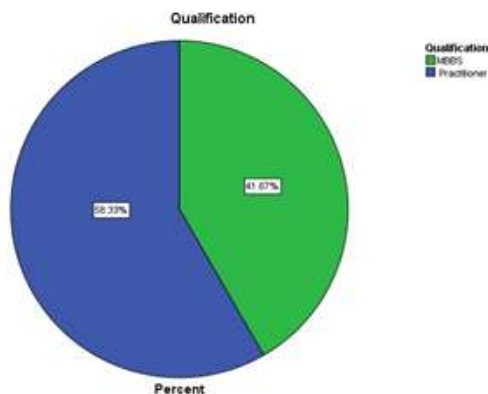


Figure 1

Piechart represents the qualification of the participants where blue colour represents Practitioners (PG) -58.33% and green colour represents MBBS Graduates-41.67%

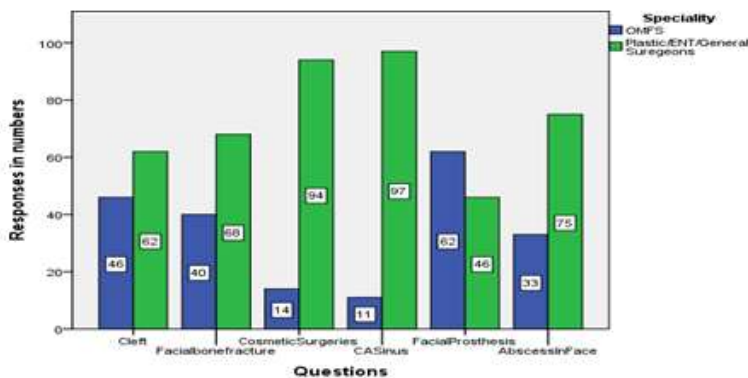


Figure 2

Bar Diagram represents the responses received for certain questions, where Blue color represents OMFS/ Dental specialists and Green color represents Plastic Surgeons/ ENT/ General Surgeons. And an average of 34.5% were aware of the speciality and 65.5% were not aware

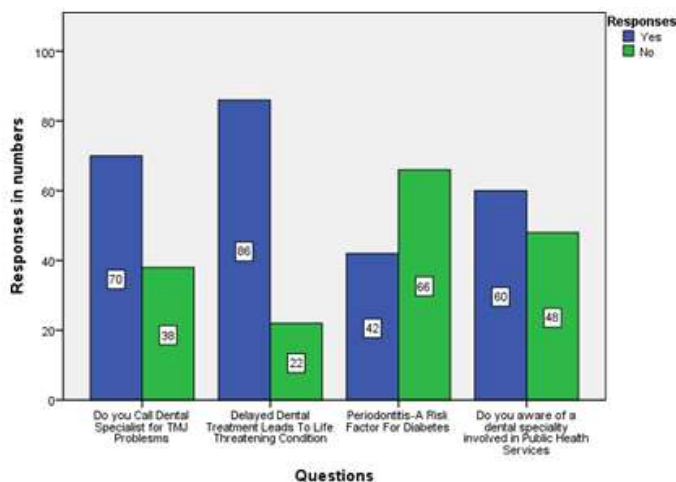


Figure 3

Bar Diagram represents the responses received for certain diseases and around 64.5% were aware of the questions asked.

V. DISCUSSION

“Mouth is a mirror of general health- William Osler”(6). Poor oral condition adversely affect general health and vice versa. A good health care to the patient is a combined form of cooperation between the patient and each member of the team. Each member of the team includes Physician, Dentist and Paramedics. A good rapport is needed between the team of doctors to give proper treatment. This study aims to assess the dental awareness, their knowledge about the various treatments provided by dentists, attitude among the medical professionals and also the students pursuing medicine. This becomes relevant as the results are expected to throw more light on maintaining good relationship between those team. A healthy mouth or disease free oral cavity enhances social interaction. It also improves patients self esteem and their feelings (8)

Both dental and medical practitioners form integral part of comprehensive health care team, but there is a lack of knowledge of various dental specialities among medical professionals. Some of the early studies shown that lack of general medical practitioner’s knowledge contributes to delay in referral and treatment.

Though there is an increased Dental health campaign in the community in the form of advertisements, camps etc, still the knowledge about oral health is lacking and there should be some positive change in the community.

Unlike Medical training where medical student had little or no exposure to dental training, dental training involves exposure to basic medical sciences during their course. This must have contributed to why some dental professionals show basic medical knowledge since medical training was incorporated into their curriculum. Therefore, inclusion of basic dental education into the medical curriculum will aid in improving dental knowledge among medical practitioners as suggested by many studies

For example, (3) Oral and Maxillo facial Surgeons are trained to treat not only facial bone fractures, but also various other treatments for patients. It includes cleft and craniofacial surgeries, salivary gland diseases, TMJ problems, Cosmetic surgeries like Orthognathic Surgeries, Rhinoplasty, Oral cancer. With proper training and association with Plastic surgeons many other surgeries are also included. Despite of all there, it is peculiar to see that medical community did not realise the role of OMFS. Almost majority of participants prefer ENT surgeons for CA sinus surgery and Plastic surgeons for cosmetic surgeries.

Almost majority of participants expect OMFS to do cleft lip/palate surgery, but almost equal percentage expect Plastic surgeon to do the same. Many participant did not know that gum disease and diabetes are related. Some participants strongly disagreed that delayed referral of dental treatment can lead to life threatening conditions.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, Dental knowledge of qualified medical professionals is different when compared to the general people. Though they are well qualified their knowledge about dental diseases, relationship of oral health with

systemic diseases and some life threatening dental diseases are scarce. There is still lack of awareness of various dental specialities among medical professionals and need to be improved. Dental speciality is still searching for the identity among doctors rather than public.

Conflict Of Interest: None declared

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