

## Existing Level of Dental Health in School Children

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To determine existing level of dental health in school children. **Methodology:** Two hundred and thirty seven students (89 boys and 148 girls) were inspected randomly according to pre test check list. **Result:** Out of 237 students, 55% had clean teeth and 52% had teeth free of caries. Cleanliness of teeth was better in boys, 68% as compared to girls 47 %. Similarly only 29 % had dental caries as compared to 59% of girls but this difference was statically insignificant. **Conclusion:** Although dental health of children is improving 52% we are still lacking behind from other countries (64-94%). Attention of parents and teachers play a very important role in improvement and maintenance of dental health.

**Keywords:** Dental health, school children, Lahore.

### INTRODUCTION

Oral health is fundamental to general health. A clean mouth enables a person to socialize without any hesitancy. Person can eat well, talk well or even laugh well. Contrary to this, bad oral hygienic conditions lead to restrictions in every day mandatory activities of eating, speaking, doing the job etc. Children are more exposed to such type of situations, and they have 12 times more restrictions in everyday life, including the absence from school even. Nearly 50 million school hours are lost annually, because of oro-dental issue.<sup>(1)</sup> Poor oral health affects the nutritional intake, which if persist, ultimately affects growth, development and appearance of child, and greatly affect the major child activities, like, eating, speaking, playing and learning. In some of studies conducted in different countries of world, to access the oral hygiene status of children of 6-12 years, it is reported that DMFT score ranges from 0.77 to 3.8.<sup>(1-5)</sup> Problem is reported more in low socio economic status families<sup>(2)</sup> and rural areas.<sup>(3,4)</sup> It is also reported that majority of children (64-99 %) brush their teeth once or twice a day, this practice is better in urban areas and more in girls.<sup>(4-7)</sup> Even in disable children, those who are brushed by the parents /caregivers once/ twice a day has better dental hygiene<sup>(8)</sup>. It is also reported that teachers in the schools have better knowledge, attitude and practices regarding dental health<sup>(4)</sup>. However no statistically significant difference is observed in dental health status of 6 or 12 year old children.<sup>(9)</sup> Pakistan is facing enormous oral health challenges in the 21st century. In order to decrease the burden of oral diseases on the scarce resources of the country, there is a need to move away from curative care to preventive care. For this paradigm shift, there is a need to know that what is the existing status of dental health in school going children and practices for this oral health. With this idea this study was conducted.

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### METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted in two schools (one boys, one girls) in Kot Arian, Raiwind road, Lahore in Jan. 2015. A structured, pre-tested check list was used to inspect the oral hygiene of students in both the schools. After getting ethical clearance, from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), interview teams, school administration and participating students were explained the purpose and method of data collection. 89 boys and 148 girls willingly opted for oral inspection. After collection, data was entered in computers, using SPSS software. Data was cleaned, organized and variables of interest were cross-matched. Chi Square test was applied to find any statistical significance.

### RESULTS

A total of 237 students were included in the study. 89 were boys where as 148 were girls. The age of the participants is prescribed in table 1 weher as study of cleanliness is prescribed in tabel 2:

**Table 1: Age of the students**

Gender	Mean age	N	Std. Dev
Boys	13.94	89	2.38
Girls	11.52	148	2.48
Total		237	

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of students according to status of cleanliness**

Teeth cleanliness	Frequency	Percent
Clean	130	54.9
No clean	107	45.1
Total	237	100

**Table 3: Frequency Distribution of students according to status of teeth cleanliness**

Caries status of teeth	Frequency	Percent
Healthy	124	52.3
Caries	113	47.7
Total	237	100

**Table 4: Cross tabulation between gender of student and cleanliness of teeth**

Gender	Teeth clean	Percent	Teeth not clean	Percent	Total
Male	61	68.5	28	31.4	89
Female	69	46.6	79	53.4	148
Total	130		107		237

**Table 5: Cross tabulation dental caries and gender**

Gender	Hygiene status of teeth				Total
	Healthy		Caries		
Boys	63	71 %	26	29 %	89
Girls	61	41 %	87	59 %	148
Total	124		113		

**Table 6: Two groups of age of students**

Age group	Hygiene status of teeth		Total
	Clean	Not clean	
12 years and below	56	55	111
13 years and above	74	52	126
Total	130	107	237

## DISCUSSION

The survey was conducted in public sector school of Kot Arayan, Raiwind Road, Lahore. Basically it is semi urban and semi-rural area having both type of cultural influence and standards. Socioeconomically this area and its residents belong to lower middle class working in fields, factories or vendor jobs. Above painted demographic picture, reflects that, population living in the area is in the transition of improving the standard of living at their own. Regularity, punctuality, nutritional and hygienic status of children coming to the schools usually reflect the mindset of the parents in general and mothers, in particular regarding the health making determinants of children. In total 237 students were inspected for oral health, out of which 89 were boys and 148 were girls. Boys had a higher mean age as compared to girls (Table.1) . 55% of the students had clean teeth (Table.2) similarly 52% of the students had teeth free of carries (Table 3).

Low percentage of carries as compared to some countries, like Thailand gives an impression that Pakistani children

have better dental hygiene<sup>(2,3)</sup>, but still many countries have now adopted better oral hygienic practices.<sup>(2)</sup> Cleanliness of teeth was better in boys (68%) as compared to girls (47%). (table 4), Similarly only 29% of boys had dental caries as compared to 59% of girls ( Table. 5), and these differences are statistically significant at p value < 0.005. Apparently it was observed that boys had better dental health status as compared to the girls, and it negates the concept that girls have better hygienic attitude as reflected in a study.<sup>(5)</sup> But while analyzing the finding on grouping the students in to two groups of 12 years or lesser age and 13 years or above age group, it came out that 72% of boys were age 13 years or more as compared 42% of girls in this age group (Table 6), and teeth cleanliness level is slightly better in senior age group of age 13 years or more. So it could be one reason for why boys had better level of dental hygiene.

## CONCLUSION

Although public sector school in Kot Arayan, Raiwind road is a semi urban area and the residents belong to lower middle class, majority 52% of students had status of healthy teeth, which reflects that parents are conscious about hygiene of their children. School team is also playing their role in maintaining the healthy practice among the students.

Above study conducted on students of Kot Arayan school concluded that although dental health status of school children is improving( 54%), we are still lacking behind from other countries where dental health status is much better( 64-99%).

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