

# KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND AWARENESS REGARDING INFANT ORAL HEALTH CARE AMONG GYNECOLOGIST AND PEDIATRICIANS

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Gynecologist and Pediatricians are the first to observe any dental disease in the child as they are usually approached by the parents for any illness. Many pediatric oral diseases are preventable if they are recognized and preventive care is encouraged and refer to the pediatric dentist whenever necessary. The lack of parental education in the prenatal period and the neglect of oral health care in infancy can have deleterious effect as during this period foundation of permanent dentition is laid. Hence appropriate knowledge of gynecologist and pediatricians regarding infant oral health care can lead to early diagnosis, timely referral and proper management of the same. **Aim:** To evaluate the knowledge, attitude, awareness and practices regarding infant oral health care among gynecologist and pediatricians in Ahmedabad city regarding. **Materials and Method:** A cross sectional survey was undertaken among 140 gynecologist and pediatricians of Ahmedabad city. A self-administered questionnaire was personally handed over to the gynecologist and the pediatricians and collected on the same day. The data was collected and statistically analyzed. **Results:** The study revealed that majority of gynecologist and pediatricians need to have more knowledge regarding infant oral health care. **Conclusion:** As health care professionals, responsible for the overall health of children, knowledge regarding oral health is important for both gynecologist and pediatricians so that they could early diagnose and refer these patients to the pedodontist in order to avoid further spread of the disease and prevent its future complications.

**Keywords:** Infant oral health care, knowledge, awareness, gynecologist, pediatricians.

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## INTRODUCTION:

Oral health is considered to be a vital part of general health and since decades, the outlook to treat oral disease has been, correcting the destruction and then start prevention. So, for good oral health guidelines recommend to put more emphasis on early professional intervention and primary prevention.<sup>1</sup>

Although the AAPD calls for every child to have a dental visit by the time the first primary tooth erupts and to have access to preventive dental care throughout childhood, the reality is different, especially for children in low-income families.<sup>2</sup> Gynecologists and Pediatricians are the first to observe any dental disease in the child as they are usually approached by the parents for any illness.<sup>3</sup> Many pediatric oral diseases are preventable if they recognize and encourage preventive care and refer patients to pediatric dentist whenever necessary. Unfortunately, medical professional's knowledge and inclination to practice preventive dentistry has been shown to be lacking. In fact, the incidence of permanent tooth dental caries has declined consistently over the last three decades than that of the primary tooth caries. So, it remains to be seen

whether the medical community can effect the change in that pattern.

Hence appropriate knowledge of gynecologists and pediatricians regarding infant oral health care can lead to early diagnosis, timely referral and proper management of the same.

Table 1: Knowledge about infant oral health care

	Yes	No	Don't know
The first baby tooth appears the child's mouth at the age of 6 months	95.7%	2.9%	1.4%
Tooth decay is caused by bacteria that are transmitted by sharing feeding utensils (eg:spoon)	7.1%	74.3%	18.6%
Disease of primary teeth can affect the permanent teeth	60%	34.3%	5.7%

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

A cross sectional survey was undertaken among 140 gynecologist and pediatricians of Ahmedabad city through random sampling. A self-administered questionnaire was personally handed over to all of them and collected on the same day. It comprised a series of questions pertaining to personal and

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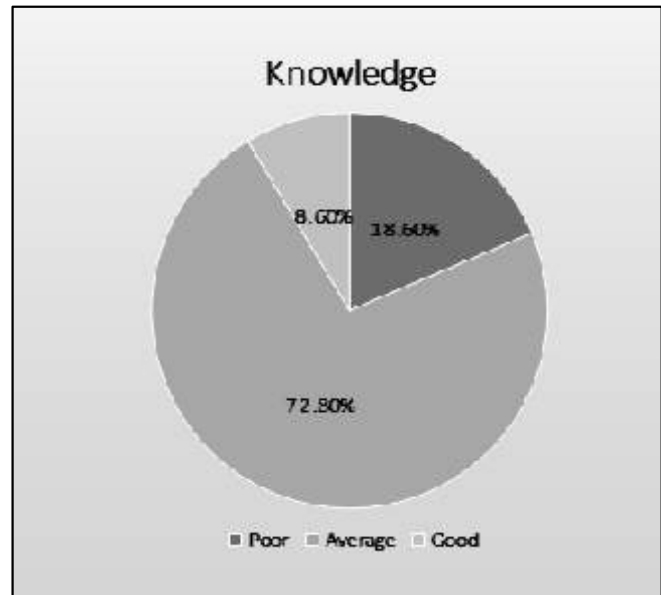
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demographic characteristics and infant oral health care. The data was collected and statistically analyzed.

**RESULTS**

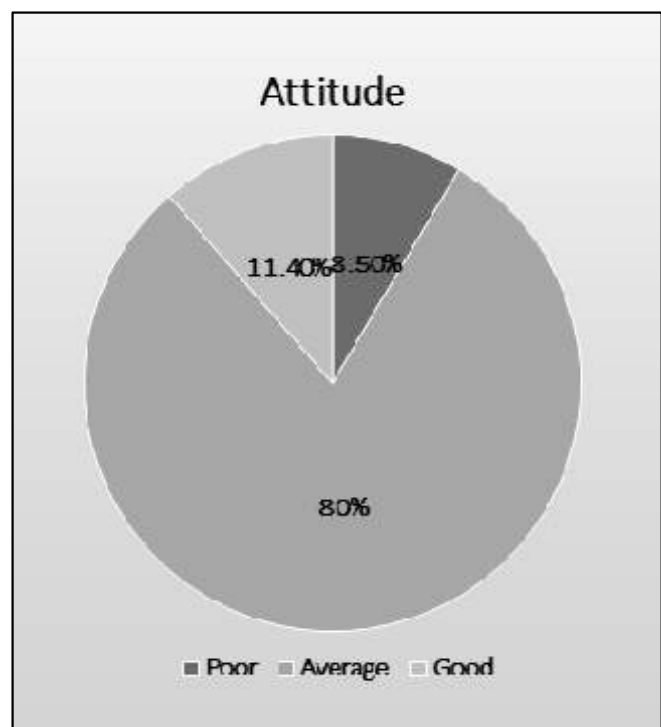
The scores obtained were stored in an excel spread sheet (Microsoft, Inc., Redmond, Wash) and statistical analysis was carried out using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Pearson's Chi Square test was used.

95.7% of the practitioners were aware of, the first baby tooth appears the child's mouth at the age of 6 month. 74.3% of the practitioners didn't know that tooth decay is caused by bacteria that is transmitted by sharing utensils. 60% reported that disease of primary teeth can affect the permanent teeth. 31.4% of the practitioners didn't know that bacteria that cause tooth decay get transmitted from mother to child. Most of the practitioners (54.3%) were aware about the ill effects of prolonged breast feeding/bottle feeding on oral health of infants. Half of the practitioners (54.3%) knew that health of the kid's mouth effects its appearance in future. Only 37.1% of practitioners knew that oral health of the mother influences the infants oral health.



97.1% of the practitioners knew that brushing your baby's teeth is important for oral health. 60% of the practitioners believed that parents should take their baby to dentist as soon as first tooth erupts for preventive dental health examination and 61.4% agree that effective cleaning of teeth can be achieved by 3-4 years old child. 51.4% of them disagreed that infants mouth prior to tooth eruption, needs to be clean. Most of them agreed that parents should be educated to reduce the frequency of sucrose consumption by their child, especially in between meals.

Does prenatal nutrition of mother affects the childs dental health	65.7%	24.3%	10.0%
Bacteria that cause tooth decay that transmitted from mother to child	31.4%	37.2%	1.04%
Does at will breast feeding/ bottle feeding influence the oral / dental health of the infant	54.3%	34.3%	1.04%
Bottle feeding at night leads to dental caries in infants	32.9%	50.0%	7.01%
Prolong breast feeding leads to dental caries in infants	11.4%	78.6%	10.0%
Do you know that health of the kid's mouth affects its appearance in future	54.3%	17.1%	28.6%
Does oral/dental health of the mother influence the infants oral health	37.1%	48.6%	14.3%



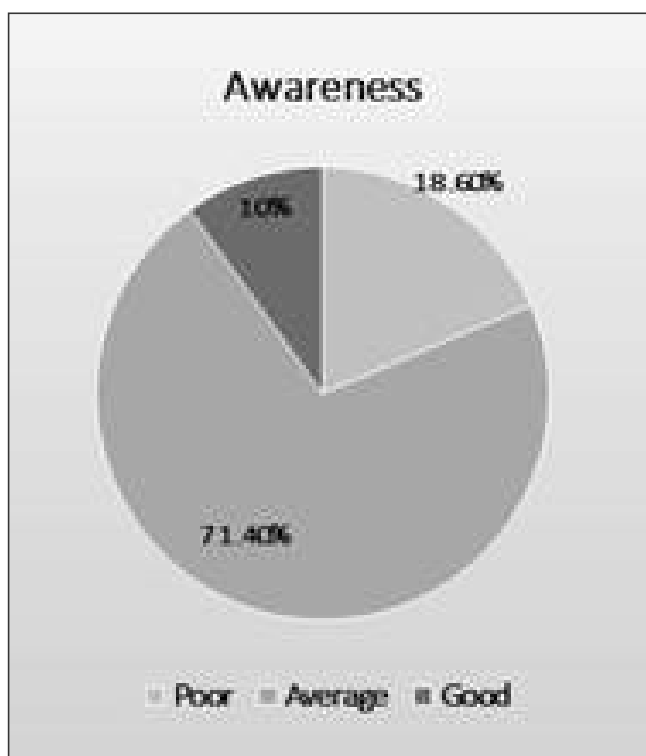
**Table 2: Attitude and Practices about infant oral health care**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Brushing your baby's teeth is important for oral health.	97.1%	2.9%	
Parents should take their baby to dentist as soon as first tooth erupt for preventive dental health examination	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%
Effective cleaning of teeth can be achieved by 3-4 years old child	61.4%	7.1%	31.4%
Infants mouth prior to tooth eruption, needs to be cleaned. Especially, Gums with soft cloth	20.0%	51.4%	28.6%
Mottling, tooth decay, discoloration of upper front teeth: it is serious issue to caution parents and refer to dentist	74.3%	15.7%	10.0%
To prevent caries parents should be educated to reduce the frequency of sucrose consumption by their child, especially between meals	80.0%	8.6%	11.4%
Instilling a preventive approach towards management of infant oral health requires combined efforts of medical professionals, pediatric dentist, parents and child.	90.0%	7.1%	2.9%
Do you examine infants cavity at birth	51.4%	48.6%	0.0%
Do you advise bottle feeding for infants	24.3%	75.7%	0.0%

**Table 3: Awareness about rampant caries**

	True	False	Don't know
A balance diet is essential for the healthy growth of a baby's teeth	92.9%	4.3%	2.9%
Weaning from a baby bottle to a sipping cup should be planned when the child is 6-month old	38.6%	57.1%	4.3%
Frequent and prolonged breast/bottle feeding in the day time can cause tooth decay	27.1%	68.6%	4.3%
Night time bottle/at will breast feeding can cause tooth decay	27.1%	61.4%	11.4%
Tooth decay can affect infants below 2 years of age	60.0%	24.3%	15.7%
A child's teeth should be cleaned/brushed as soon as the teeth erupt	62.9%	34.3%	2.9%
Fluoride in toothpaste is important for preventing tooth decay.	67.1%	5.7%	27.1%
Fluoride tablets are beneficial for control of decay in children	12.9%	12.9%	74.3%
Low fluoride tooth paste, marketed as kid's tooth paste has 1000ppm of fluoride, in India	12.9%	4.3%	82.9%
Initial treatment includes provisional restorations, diet assessment, oral hygiene instruction, and home and professional fluoride treatments.	71.4%	10.0%	18.6%

Majority (92.9%) of them agreed that balance diet is essential for the healthy growth of a baby's teeth. and 57.1% disagreed with weaning from a baby bottle to a sipping cup should be plan when the baby is 6-month-old. 61.4% disagreed that night time bottle/at will breast feeding can cause tooth decay. 62.9% of the practitioners agreed that child's teeth should be cleaned as soon as the teeth erupts and 67.1% reported that fluoride in tooth paste is important for preventing tooth decay.



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