



Research Article

CONSUMPTION OF SWEETS IN CHILDREN 6 AND BELOW 6 YEARS OF AGE IN URBAN AREAS

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016

Received in revised form 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2016

Accepted 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2017

Published online 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2017

ABSTRACT

**Aim:** To evaluate the consumption of sweets in children below 6 years of age in urban areas of Chennai.

**Background:** Sweet consumption has increased a lot in urban areas and is one of the risk factors of dental caries, especially among the children. Consuming these sweets causes tooth decay which is the most chronic childhood diseases in America. It puts the kids at the risk of childhood obesity and childhood related health problems.

**Methodology:** A survey was conducted among randomly selected 60 children in an urban area. This survey was done with the consent of parents and a total of 10 questions were asked.

**Result:** As per the survey conducted majority of the kids consumed sweets and did not take care of their oral health. Majority of the children suffered from dental caries. Childhood obesity is also seen among the children who consume a large amount of sweets.

**Conclusion:** From the above study we can find that sweet consumption has increased very much in children among the age 6 and below 6 year old. Children suffer a lot from dental related problems as well as childhood obesity and other medical related diseases. They are becoming unhealthy and sick very often.

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INTRODUCTION

During the past decades rapid changes have occurred in the distribution of oral diseases world wide (8). Adequate nutrition during early life is vital for optimal growth and development. A convincing body of research evidence demonstrates that early nutrition and food consumption patterns have long-lasting effects on the risks of later obesity and non-communicable diseases, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disorders (2). A child's nutritional needs increase around the age of 6 months; it therefore becomes necessary to introduce complementary foods in a timely, safe and adequate manner, while continuing to breastfeed. This period commonly corresponds to growth faltering in young children and is an important focus area for preventing future childhood malnutrition(3). In developing countries changing lifestyles and dietary patterns are markedly increasing the caries incidence. This study was undertaken with the following aims and objective;

To assess the dental caries oral hygiene in children of urban areas.

To assess treatment needs and suggest any possible remedial measures for planning of oral health program.

Young children who are undernourished are more susceptible to diseases. The food choices in childhood have high probability of being carried through into their adulthood life, which then contributes to the risk of many non-communicable

diseases(11). Even feeding them later in life is too little, too expensive and too late to improve nutrition or future productivity(5),(6). The prevalence of the most common dental disease dental caries has been a subject of intense debate due to its importance in statistical measurement and for the clinical control of this disease. Royapettah an urban area has large number of hospitals and dental clinics yet the people seem to have a very poor knowledge about dental health. This prompted us to do a study among children in the age 6 and below to assess the prevalence of dental caries and to increase the awareness towards oral health.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study was carried out to assess the consumption of sweets in children 6 years and below in urban areas. The study population consisted of 60 students which had been selected randomly in urban areas. Out of those 60 students 15 children were 3 years old, 15 were 4 years old, 15 were 5 years old and the rest were 6 year old. This survey was conducted with the consent of the parents and a total of 10 questions were asked about the child's eating habits. The survey was carried out in the month of December 2016.

RESULT

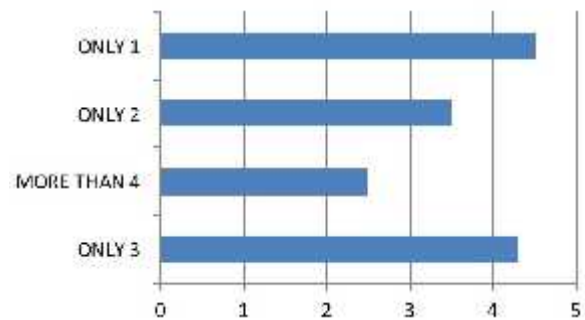
In urban areas sweet consumption has increased a lot in urban areas and is one of the risk factors of dental caries, especially among the children. Consuming a lot of the sweets and toffee's causes tooth decay which is the most chronic

childhood in India. It puts the kids at the risk of childhood obesity and childhood related health problems.

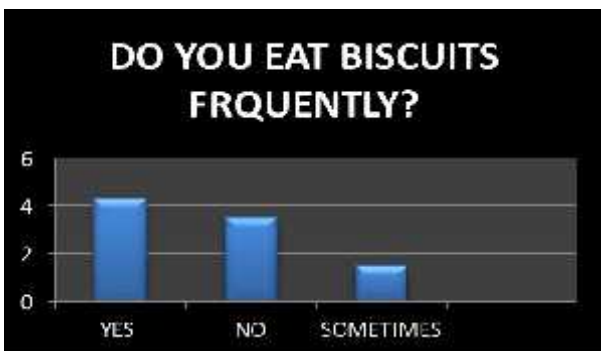


**Chart 1** shows the amount of juices children drink in a day. We can see that 40% of the children consume only 1 drink per day and 30% of the children consume 2 drinks per day and 15% of the students drink 3 juices per day and the rest 15% of the students drink more than 4 juices

### HOW MANY CHOCOLATES DO YOU EAT IN A DAY?



**Chart 5** shows the amount of chocolates consumed in a day. 40% of the kids consume only 1 chocolate per day, 35% of the children consume 2 chocolates per day, 15% of the children consume only 3 chocolates per day and 10% of the children consume more than 4 chocolates per day.

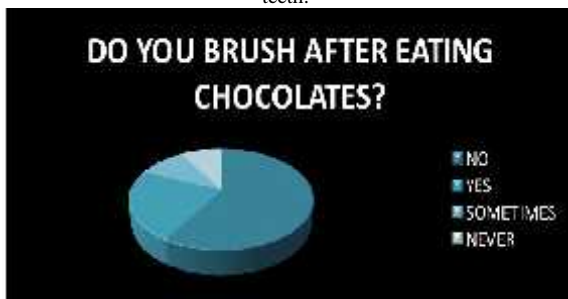


**Chart 2** shows the amount of biscuits and sweet items consumed frequently. 60% of the children consumed biscuits frequently. 30% of the children do not consume any biscuits and the rest 10% of the kids consume biscuits rarely.

### how many times do u brush your teeth?

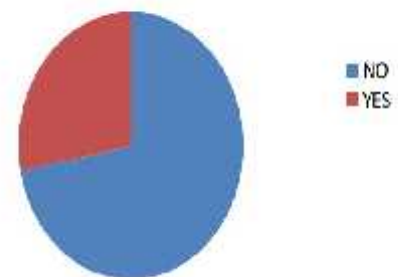


**Chart 3** shows the number of times the children brush there teeth. Among them 60% of the children brushed there teeth everyday, 20% of the kids brush their Teeth once in a week, 10% of the children brush there teeth every month and the rest 10% of the kids never brush there teeth.



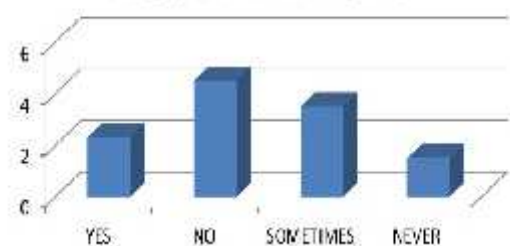
In **chart 4**, the question asked was whether the children brush there teeth after eating chocolates. 70% of the children did not brush there teeth after eating chocolate, 25% of the children brushed there teeth after consuming chocolates, 10% of the kids brushed sometimes after eating chocolates and 5% of the kids never brushed their teeth after eating chocolates.

### DO YOU USE A MOUTHWASH?



**Chart 6** shows the use of mouthwash by children. 75% of the children do not use mouthwash and the rest 25% of the children use mouthwash.

### DO YOU BRUSH YOUR TEETH REGULARLY AT NIGHT?



**Chart 7** shows if the children brush there teeth regularly at night or not. 40% of the children did not brush there teeth at night, 30% of the children brushed there teeth at night, 20% of the children brushed there teeth sometime and the rest 10% of the children never brush there teeth at night.



**Chart 8** shows the no of children visiting the dentist regularly. 75% of the children do not visit the dentist, 20% of the children visit the dentist and the rest 5% of the children visit there dentist sometimes.

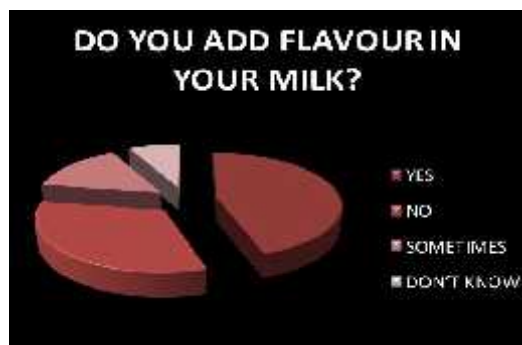


Chart 9 shows if the children used any flavours in their milk. 45% of the children use flavour in their milk. 25% of the children do not flavour the milk. 20% of the children flavour their milk sometimes and 10% of the children did not know.



Chart 10 shows the different flavours added in the milk. 50% of the children added chocolate flavour in their milk, 30% of the children used vanilla flavour in their milk and the rest 20% of the children did not use any flavour.

## DISCUSSION

This study documents one of the major oral health issues in early childhood (7). A good nutrition is the bedrock of lifelong health, and it begins in infancy (9). This population-based study, carried out in a medium-sized city of Chennai, showed that the children's diet needs improvement. The consumption of sugar, candies, chocolates and snacks was above the recommended amount (1). Most of the children suffer from dental caries and are obese. High dose of sugar intake can cause many health problems such as tooth decay, obesity, nutrition deficiencies. Eating a lot of sugar causes cavities which is the most chronic disease nowadays. It is important to reinforce guidelines to promote healthier eating habits, which may persist later in life (1).

Children do not have a balanced diet and are not in proper health. According to chart 1 seen above, we could see that a children consume a lot of drinks per day which is extremely harmful to health. These juices have 11 teaspoons of sugar in them which again gives rise to many other parameters such as obesity and other health related problem. Another problem faced by the kids who consume lot of sweet items is obesity. Childhood obesity is very common nowadays in urban areas. Children from very young age suffer from obesity. It is noted that the rise in obesity is partially linked to the increased consumption of sweets.

Consumption of these sweets do not have any nutrition in them. They only add calories to the body thus making the body less immune and leading to many illness. Nutrition related health problems often start in childhood, and are increasingly significant causes of disability and premature death world wide. Under nutrition and low energy intake are the major problems in developing countries. In such countries, the real hazard results from the consumption of higher energy foods, an unbalanced diet, and improper eating habits (10).

In addition to higher consumption of sugary snacks, over half of mothers of children 6 and below add sweetener, such as sugar or honey, to liquid or foods consumed (2). Thus increasing the level of sugar intake and causing even more health related problems.

Majority of the children do not visit the dentist the regularly. Visiting the dentist plays a very important role in child's life as the dentist can help the child in taking care of the his/ her oral health. Not visiting the dentist can cause the loss of teeth at a young age and can cause periodontal diseases.

## CONCLUSION

A survey conducted on consumption of sweets in children 6 and below 6 years of age in urban areas shows that the children consume a lot of sweets which are harmful for the body and can cause obesity and other health related problems. The children showed vegetable consumption below the recommended level, while foods of the group of oil and fats, as well as other group of sugar, candies, chocolate and snacks, were consumed in excess(2). The children consumed large amounts of sodium and saturated fat (4). With this poor diet it can affect the child's physical and mental state and can have an impact on the quality of the learning of the child.

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