

KNOWLEDGE, AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES OF PATIENTS TOWARDS REPLACEMENT OF MISSING TEETH

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Article Info

Volume 82

Page Number: 17190 - 17195

Publication Issue:

January - February 2020

Article History

Article Received: 18 October 2019

Revised: 14 November 2019

Accepted: 22 December 2019

Publication: 29 February 2020

Abstract

Smile is a window into one's personality and play a significant part in the maintenance of a healthy personality and an affirmative self-image. Tooth loss is psychologically a very traumatizing and upsetting experience, and is considered to be a serious event in the life of a person, requiring significant psychological readjustments. Patients may suffer real and perceived detrimental effects following the loss of one or more teeth which substantially reduce the quality of life affecting the patient emotionally, socially, physically and psychologically. The aim of this study was to investigate the knowledge, awareness and attitude of patient's towards the replacement of missing teeth. The study was conducted using a questionnaire. It was evaluated 100 patients of both gender. The questionnaire included questions of demographic data, questions to assess facial and dental aesthetics, dental satisfaction and treatments considering patients notion to improve dental esthetics. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics. Patients with at least one missing tooth (excluding the third molars) were included. The study was conducted using a questionnaire. Majority of the patients (36%) did not have previous experience of any sort of prosthesis. Although most of the patients preferred to have fixed partial denture (40%) some of them responded that they would be comfortable with removable partial denture (24%). Low felt need was the most common reason among this study group for delay in seeking dental replacement, while 5% patients were in the post extraction healing period. Dentists were found to be the most important driving force for patient awareness regarding replacement of teeth. Majority of the patients agreed that dental visits should be regular. Some patients (25%) did not appreciate the importance of restoring teeth while 62.5% of the patients had the perception that artificial teeth were not equivalent to natural teeth. In order to enlighten the negative effects of missing teeth on oral health, the importance of different types of media cannot be overlooked. It is therefore recommended that communication program be strengthened at district and local levels to stimulate the development of awareness toward the indications and contraindications of the options available for replacement of missing teeth, which can satisfy esthetic and functional needs along with improving the perception of patients regarding their dentition.

Key words: Trends, attitudes, knowledge, replacement, missing teeth.

INTRODUCTION:

Smile is a window into one's personality and play a significant part in the maintenance of a healthy personality and an affirmative self-image (Roessler, 2003). Tooth loss is psychologically a very traumatizing and upsetting experience, and is considered to be a serious event in the life of a person, requiring significant psychological readjustment (Diwan et al., 2015; Omar et al., 2004). Patients may suffer real and perceived detrimental effects following the loss of one or more teeth which substantially reduce the quality of life affecting the patient emotionally, socially, physically and psychologically. (J. Fiske et al., 1998)

In the past, prosthetic treatment involved replacement of missing teeth by means of removable partial dentures (RPD's), fixed dental prosthesis (FDP's), complete dentures, or over dentures. Recently, requirements such as esthetics and functional comfort are considered more important and more easily achieved with dental implants (J. Fiske et al., 1998; Janice Fiske et al., 2001).

Attitudes are not taught but caught or acquired by social interaction. The literature shows that media and dental professionals are the main and the important sources of information regarding oral health. Health behaviour as defined by Steptoe and colleagues is "the activities under taken by people in order to protect, promote or maintain health and to prevent disease. Some factors that could influence a community's behaviour regarding health include: common beliefs, knowledge, values, skills, finances,

time and the influence of family personnel, friends, and co-workers (Davis et al., 2000). Adults And children nowadays have more expectations of their dental health as compared to the past (Allen & McMillan, 2003).

Clinical dental examination, and clinicians view point and beliefs have long been used as the mechanism for formulating treatment plans for patients. Conversely, now, equal importance is given to other mechanisms such as patient's demand for treatment and self-reported oral status. There is a direct relationship between the number of teeth present and total satisfaction with oral status. However, the challenge mainly is to satisfy the patient's demand and replace the missing teeth for improving the function, esthetics and quality of life without harming the remaining teeth or gingival tissues surrounding the teeth (Mukatash et al., 2010).

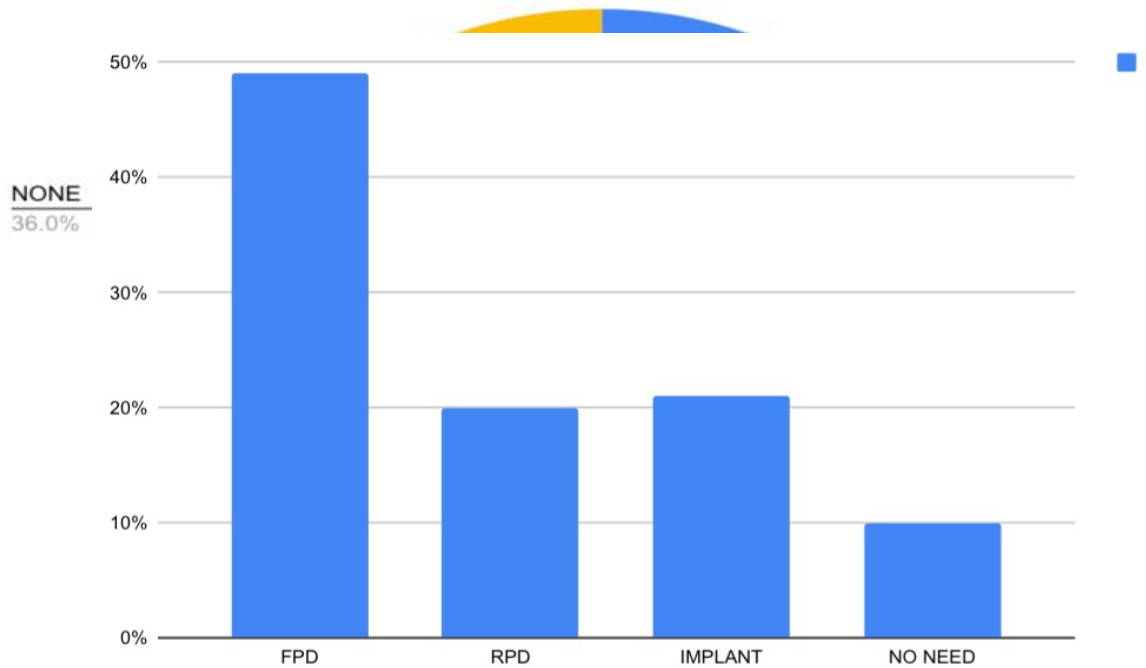
The present study was done to assess the level of knowledge, attitude, and awareness among patients aged 20-65 years toward the options available for tooth replacement.

METHODOLOGY

This cross sectional survey was carried out on a sample of 100 patients seen at the Out Patient Department of Saveetha Dental College. All patients with at least one tooth missing (excluding third molars) had participated in the study. Subjects were informed and their consent was obtained. Patients who did not give consent and those below 18 years were excluded from the study.

The study involved completion of a pre-designed and structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions regarding reasons for not visiting a dentist on a routine basis and awareness and knowledge towards

The pie chart show that (36%) of the patients did not have any experience with any sort of prostheses. Although (40%) of the subjects preferred to have fixed partial dentures and some of them(24%) were comfortable with



the prosthetic options along with source of information for these options. The data obtained were analysed.

removable partial dentures.

RESULTS:

Graph 2: Preference for tooth replacement.

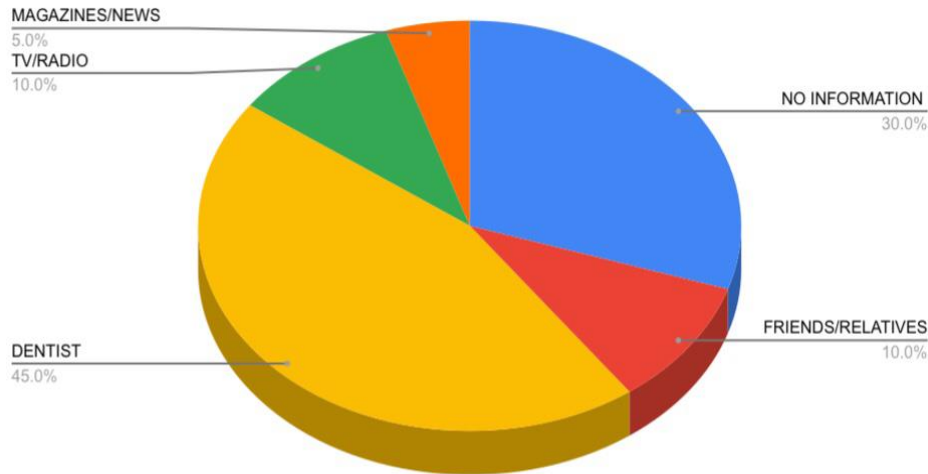
A patient population of 100 participated in this study of which 50% were males and 50% were females. Mean age of the study subjects was with 20 and 60 years being the youngest and oldest participant respectively.

Majority of the patients included in the study wanted to improve function while the next main reason was esthetic concern.

Graph1: Previous experience with the type of prosthesis.

The graph shows that majority (50%) of the

partial dentures (20%) followed by



participants opted their preference for fixed partial dentures, followed by removable

implants(20%).

Graph 3: Source of information

The pie chart shows that Dentists were found to be the most important driving force for patient awareness regarding replacement of teeth, while magazines and newspapers were the sources providing least information about the importance of tooth replacement.

replacement of teeth. This study contrasted to that of Akeel who found that about 82 percent of the subjects had the perception of tooth replacement (Akeel, 2003).Elias and Sheiham conducted a review of literature and found that, in general, patients were more likely to seek replacement of a missing anterior tooth than a posterior tooth, and rated aesthetics above function in their priority for tooth replacement (Elias & Sheiham, 1998).

Majority of the patients (54%) agreed that dentists should be visited regularly for oral health related issues. Some patients (25%) did not appreciate the importance of restoring teeth and (21%) of the patients had perception that artificial teeth were not equivalent to natural teeth.

The Adult Dental Health Survey of 1998 in the UK, also noted that patients with a reduced dentition were more likely to seek replacement of an anterior tooth, but a significant proportion felt that they would also prefer to have missing posterior teeth replaced (Steele et al., 2000). Researchers reported that an individual's subjective need for the replacement of missing teeth was based mainly upon esthetic rather than

DISCUSSION:

The present study was an attempt to find out about the attitudes of patients towards replacement of missing teeth.The patients reported on their own to the institute for
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functional factors. Therefore demand of tooth replacement is strongly associated to the location of the absent tooth. Patient's perception plays a major role in decision for replacement of posterior teeth, and cosmetic dental treatment . (Leake et al., 1994)

Current study shows that female patients were concerned about esthetic as well as functional replacement while males wanted prosthesis for mastication mainly. The reasons could be that most males are either aware of only the masticatory function of teeth or their preference of esthetics and phonetics comes second to functional needs. But for the female patients the most important teeth were anterior teeth and for males preferred teeth to be replaced were posteriors. According to Leake et al. patient's subjective needs for replacement of teeth, especially posteriors, is mostly low as they rarely improve the social status(Steele et al., 2000).

In the current study the main source of information about the replacement of missing teeth was dentist for both genders which is in accord to a previous study carried out by Mukatash et al in Jordan (Mukatash et al., 2010). Present results were similar to Mukatash's study which established that family and friends were significant motivators for oral maintenance in general and tooth replacement in particular.

CONCLUSION

In order to enlighten the negative effects of missing teeth on oral health, the importance of different types of media cannot be overlooked. It is therefore recommended that

communication program be strengthened at district and local levels to stimulate the development of awareness toward the indications and contraindications of the options available for replacement of missing teeth, which can satisfy esthetic and functional needs along with improving the perception of patients regarding their dentition.

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