

HOW DHARMAPURI DENTISTS ADVISE THEIR PATIENTS TO MAINTAIN GOOD ORAL HYGIENE.

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ABSTRACT

AIM AND OBJECTIVE:

To assess the oral hygiene suggestions given by Dharmapuri orthodontists to their patients.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Questionnaires were distributed to dentists all over Dharmapuri and gained information about how orthodontists advised their patients on maintaining a good oral hygiene.

RESULTS:

Tooth brushing was the most commonly suggested methods of oral hygiene.

CONCLUSION:

Many orthodontists advocate appropriate oral hygiene measures, but the efficacy of such methods is determined by the patient's motivation.

KEY WORDS: *orthodontist,orthodontic treatment ,oral hygiene.*

INTRODUCTION:

Good oral hygiene is an important factor for a good and healthy smile. Most papers on the management of oral hygiene in patients undergoing orthodontic treatment have concentrated on the effects of different oral-hygiene regimes and on the efficacy of various oral-hygiene aids in plaque control and reduction of gingival inflammation (1). Patients undergoing orthodontic treatment needs high standard of oral hygiene. Poor oral hygiene may lead to various problems such as plaque accumulation, gingivitis and other periodontal diseases (1). The most common objectives of an orthodontic treatment are facial and dental aesthetics and the improvement in the masticatory function. There are a continuously increasing number of adult patients who actively seek orthodontic treatment, and it is also an undeniable fact that the incidence of periodontal disease increases with age. Therefore, the number of patients with periodontal problems that attend orthodontic practices is significantly greater than in the past. All evidence-based literature concerning the orthodontic-periodontic relationships shows that the results of orthodontic treatment are good in patients, who have excellent oral hygiene (2). Regular brushing, mouthwash, flossing are some of the methods suggested by orthodontists to their patients. Manual brushing, one of the oldest methods for maintaining oral hygiene is still effectively used. Fluoride mouth rinses significantly reduce the extent of enamel decalcification and gingival inflammation during orthodontic treatment. Chlorohexidine mouthwashes, as an adjunct to tooth brushing, have been found effective in the control of gingival inflammation, although prolonged use may cause problems with staining (2).More recently, pre-brushing rinses have been introduced, though these show no difference in effect on plaque accumulation or gingival health (3).The importance of tooth cleaning and use of fluoride toothpaste is well recognised in caries prevention(4).A study was done in Dharmapuri district to know how Dharmapuri dentists advice their patients to maintain good oral hygiene. There are about 25 dentists in semi-urban

Dharmapuri out of which 2 are Orthodontists. This article evaluates how dentists in Dharmapuri advice their patients to maintain a good oral hygiene.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

In early January 25 questionnaires were distributed to dentists in and around Dharmapuri. This study gathered information about the practitioners qualification, their experience and how they advice their patients undergoing orthodontic treatment to maintain a good oral hygiene.

RESULTS:

Out of 25 questionnaires 17 were completed and returned: 8 remained unreturned. The table given below gives information about the different oral-hygiene options listed in the questionnaire, together with the percentages of respondents who advised or did not advise their use

According to survey information 61.11% (n=11) of dentists were male and 38.81% (n=7) were female dentists.

Ten members were in the age group of 35-43 years old, followed by 7 in the age group between 25-34 years. It was found by survey that only 1 dentist was in the age group between 44 to 52 years.

Almost 33.33% of the examined dentists were from sub urban area and 66.7% were from urban areas.

Most of the dentists were general practitioners, 2 dentists were Orthodontists 2 were Endodontist and only one dentist specialised in Oral surgery.

Nearly every dentist advised to follow regular tooth brushing and proper dietary advice. Around three quarter of dentists advices to use chlorhexidine mouthwash and fluoride rinse and nearly half of the dentists advices floss and the rest advice using disclosing tablets.

This study concludes that majority of the dentists were general dentists ageing between 35-43 years and advised to use tooth brush and chlorohexidine mouthwash..

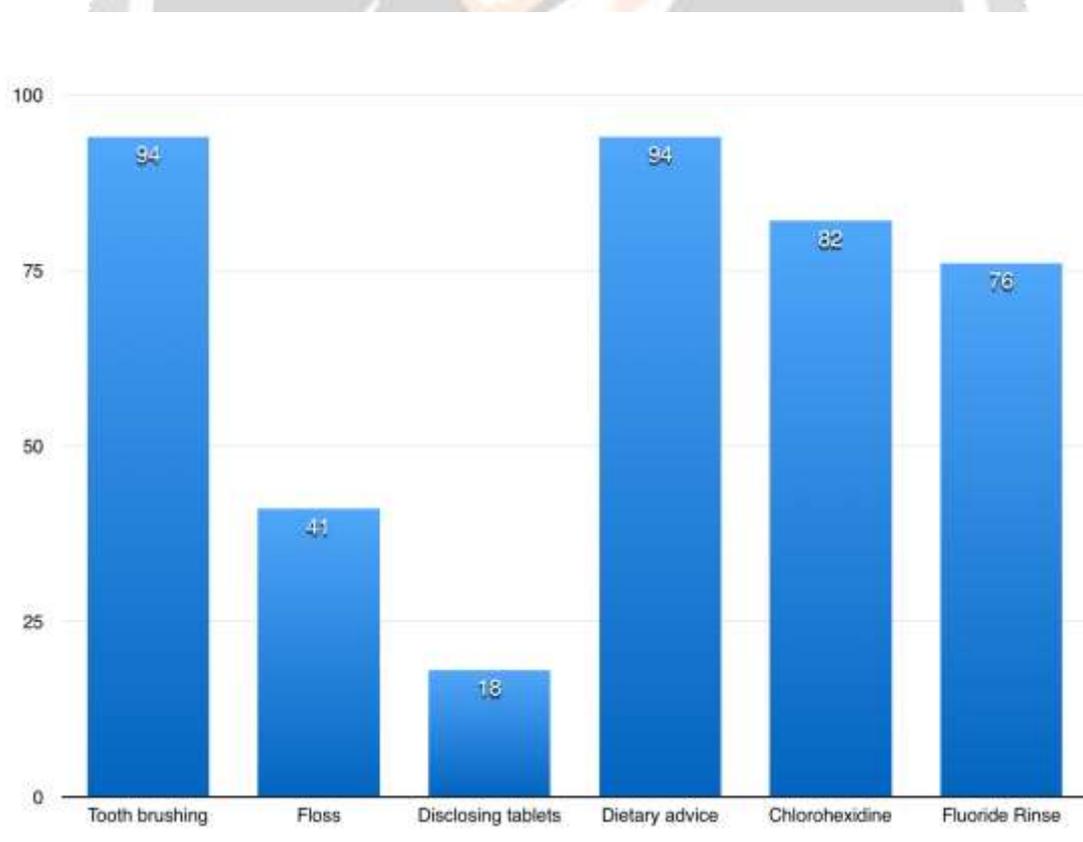


Table 1: Percentage of dentists advising each oral hygiene aid

The most advised methods of all is to practice regular brushing(94%) to maintain a good oral hygiene. There may be two reasons: to reduce the risk of appliances being broken by inappropriate foodstuffs (e.g. toffees), and to reduce the risk of enamel decalcification(1). They also equally emphasize on dietary advice. Significant number of participants (82%) recommend chlorhexidine mouthwashes. Considerable number of participants (76%) recommend fluoride rinses to maintain good oral hygiene. Floss(14%) and disclosing tablets(18%) are the least suggested oral hygiene aids. None of the participants suggested any other methods of oral hygiene.

DISCUSSION :

Patients undergoing orthodontic treatment must maintain a very good oral hygiene because they are more susceptible to oral diseases when compared to others(2). Particularly in patients with severe malocclusions, there is a need for interdisciplinary treatment. Most Orthodontists in Dharmapuri aim to establish a standard of oral hygiene sufficient to prevent enamel decalcification and gingival inflammation.

Regular tooth brushing is the most advised method of all. Nearly 94% of participants advise their patients to brush regularly. Tooth brushing serves the dual purpose of plaque removal and topical fluoride application, both contributing to the control of dental caries (4). The orthodontist has to provide the patient with initial brushing instructions with either a conventional toothbrush or a powered one when the appliances are first placed. Brushing not only maintains a good oral hygiene, it also gives a good looking appearance and avoids bad breath(1). Thus, regular brushing not only aids oral health, it also increases our self-esteem.

Dietary advice also gets equal importance as tooth brushing. They also aim equally on following proper dietary advice. Patients wearing an orthodontic appliance find difficulties in eating. Eating wrong foods can break the appliance. People with braces should avoid hard, chewy, crunchy, and sticky food. In case of invisible braces they must be removed before eating and drinking. However, correctly given and followed dietary advice— including information on reducing or eliminating the intake of carbonated drinks, decreasing consumption of high-carbohydrate foodstuffs and reducing between-meals snacks—will reduce enamel damage (1).

Wearing fixed orthodontic appliances comprise a group that may benefit from the daily use of mouthwashes. 82% of participants recommend chlorhexidine mouthwashes for proper oral hygiene. Antiseptic mouthwash helps to kill germs, or at least water to wash away food debris. However, evidence to support their regular use in healthy patients is poor. Over use may also lead to complications like discoloration of teeth and corroding of enamel. It is proved that gingivitis reduction is significant only when the mouthwash was used followed by manual tooth brushing (2).

Fluoride rinses help to reduce plaque, enamel decalcification, gingivitis etc., (1). Because fluoride mouth rinses have resulted in only limited reductions in tooth decay among children, especially as their exposure to other sources of fluoride has increased, their use should be targeted to individuals and groups at high risk for decay. Children younger than 6 years are not advised to use fluoride mouthwashes without the supervision of their parents and without the consultation of a dentist or physician since there is a possibility of dental fluorosis, if these rinses are repeatedly swallowed(4).

The most popular oral hygiene aids prescribed by the dentists in Dharmapuri was tooth brushing and chlorhexidine mouthwashes. A comparatively lesser percentage of dentists advise dental floss. This could be due to the possible difficulty of using dental floss in orthodontic patients. Disclosing agents were least prescribed by the dentists. This could be due to the decreased penetration of these agents in the markets and the unwillingness of the dentists to over prescribe oral care agents to the patients.

CONCLUSION:

Good oral care during Orthodontic treatment can improve the long term prognosis, enhance the aesthetics and stability of the treatment. Dharmapuri Orthodontists mostly aim to maintain proper oral hygiene by regular tooth brushing. Suggestions and advice alone does not benefit patients, it would be effective only if they properly follow it. Further research is required to investigate the factors that determine patients' motivation and how their behaviour pattern can be modified with respect to various aspects of oral care.

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