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Basic practices of oral hygiene and awareness of oral and dental disease among deaf and dumb population in Saudi Arabia

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Introduction: The dental and oral health has been shown to be highly ignored among the disabled population who are dumb and deaf. This is mainly attributed to their dependence on their guardians and care providers and inadequate measures taken in the health care system.

Aim: The purpose of this research was to determine the extent of oral health-related knowledge in the dumb and deaf group of patients in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it was anticipated that necessary measures for developing awareness in the deaf and dumb population should be taken to improve their oral health status.

Method: The deaf and dumb population was selected from four cities of Saudi Arabia namely Al-Kharj, Riyadh, Abha and Dammam. To gather information regarding their oral health-related awareness, a questionnaire was developed and then appropriately filmed in the sign language with the help of a sign interpreter to make the questionnaire feasible for the deaf and dumb population. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; the first was regarding the basic practices followed by them for maintaining the oral hygiene and the second section evaluated the oral health related awareness.

Results: It was found from the results of the first section that the oral health hygiene in the disabled population was severely neglected, where 79% did not know how to brush their teeth, 83% never received any instruction regarding good oral and dental health and 90% were not satisfied with the status of their oral and dental health. The results of the second part of the questionnaire showed that the study participants lacked the basic knowledge about the maintenance of oral health and prevention of dental caries, where 75% and 88% did not know the number and duration of tooth brushing respectively. Furthermore, 92% had no awareness of the need for regular dental visits.

Conclusions: Oral health was found to be severely neglected in the deaf and dumb population studied in terms of basic practices and awareness of dental and oral diseases. Therefore, special measures should be taken to help this group of patients to establish adequate oral hygiene and raise their awareness of oral and dental diseases.

Biography

Khaled Khalaf has completed his PhD from the University of Sheffield, UK, 15 years ago and was awarded Membership in Orthodontics of both the Royal Colleges of Surgeons of England and Edinburgh, UK and a Fellowship in Dental Surgery (Orthodontics) of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Furthermore, he gained the Intercollegiate Speciality Fellowship in Orthodontics of the Royal Surgical Colleges and accreditation as a Consultant Orthodontist, as well as, a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK. He has many publications in prestigious international journals. He is a reviewer and serves on the Editorial Board of several international journals. He has also presented many papers in renowned international conferences.

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