RESEARCH ARTICLE

ORAL HEALTH STATUS OF FEMALE ORPHANAGE ADOLESCENTS COMPARED TO ADOLESCENTS LIVING WITH THEIR FAMILIES, QASSIM, SAUDI ARABIA.

*Ammad Al-Obaidullah¹, Bayader Al-Towijiry¹ and Dr. Khadiga H. Osman².

1. Dental Intern, Qassim University.
2. Assistant professor, Orthodontic and Paediatric Dentistry Department, College of Dentistry, Qassim University.

Abstract

Aim: To evaluate the dental health status of female orphans (12-20 years old) living in government orphanages in Qassim, and to compare them with the status of adolescents who live with their families. Materials & Methods: 30 orphanage girls aged 12-20 in Qassim region (study group) and 30 school girls (comparison group) of same age and area were examined orally for DMFT index and OHIS after answering a 12-questions questionnaire regarding the oral hygiene practices. Data analysis was done using SPSS. Results: The mean value of the orphan’s DMFT (5.27) was found to be higher than non-orphans group (2.03). Moreover, OHI-S showed a higher mean value in orphans (1.40) than their counterparts (0.59). A higher proportion of adolescents ‘living with families’ (66.7%) brush their teeth twice daily or more than those living in orphanage. Regarding the type of toothbrush, a significantly higher proportion of orphans (63.3%) did not know about the type of brush they use. A higher percentage of orphans (80%) use to change their brush every 3 months compared to their counterparts. A significantly higher proportion of children living with families are attending dentist when in pain (p<0.05). About one fourth of orphans have never visited a dentist. Conclusion: Oral hygiene practices and index of orphans were found to be worse than the non-orphans group, except for proper time of changing brush. There was a higher score of DMFT among orphans compared with the non-orphans subjects.
understanding of the dental health problems of an overlooked segment of the society. It will also help in determining
the dental treatment need and hence in planning oral health care services for this population. Many studies have been
conducted to investigate the dental health status among children in Saudi Arabia. In one study, caries prevalence was
found 96% of primary school children in Jeddah.\(^{(3)}\) In another study conducted in Riyadh’s intermediate schools
caries prevalence was 93.7%.\(^{(4)}\) However, there are only two published studies that investigated the dental health
status of orphans in Saudi Arabia. One in Riyadh conducted on orphans aged 4-12.\(^{(5)}\) The other in Jeddah included
orphans aged 4-5 years old only.\(^{(6)}\) No such study has ever been reported from Qassim province of Saudi Arabia.

The aim of this study was to evaluate the dental health status of female orphans (13-20 years old) living in
government orphanage in Qassim, and to compare them with the status of adolescents who live with their families
by determining oral hygiene practices, oral hygiene status and prevalence of dental caries.

Materials & Methods:-
A descriptive cross-sectional comparative study was conducted in Unaiza city at the government female orphanage
(study group), and the girls’ government middle and high school in the same region (comparison group). Approval
was obtained from the ethical committee of College of Dentistry, Qassim University (code #: EA/10/2015).
Permission was taken from orphanage’s administration and schools’ principal. Informed consents were obtained
from orphans and students above 16 years and parents of school children below or 16 years old. In the orphanage,
it was found that orphans from birth to 12 years old are mostly adopted by host families, while those who are older
than 12 years were present in the orphanage center (they were 40 in number at the time of this study).

Thirty female orphans were enrolled in the study excluding orphans without permanent stay at the orphanage and
those with the age above the selected age group. Thirty school girls living with their families belonging to the same
age group and region were randomly selected as a comparison group. A structured multiple-choice questionnaire
with 12 questions about demographic data, oral hygiene practices and dental visiting habits was filled by
interviewing the study and control groups.

Oral examination for measurement of Decayed-Missing-Filled Teeth Index (DMFT)\(^{(7)}\) and Simplified Oral Hygiene
IndexOHI-S\(^{(8)}\) was done by one examiner under strict infection control procedures using, disposable dental
examination kit (plain dental mirror and blunt explorer), gloves, masks and head-light. The data were recorded by
one surveyor in a form especially designed for the study. After data collection, oral health education was given for
both study groups and all cases that need treatment were referred to dental hospitals / centers.

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS.17). Qualitative data were presented as
frequencies and percentages, while quantitative data were presented as means and standard deviations. Chi-square
test was used as appropriate to determine the differences between groups. P-value < 0.05 was considered to be
statistically significant.

Results:-
Results of the study revealed that a higher proportion of non-orphans (66.7%) brush their teeth twice or more daily,
while (50%) of orphans brush only once a day. Regarding the type of toothbrush, (63.3%) of orphans did not know
about the type of brush they use. Higher percentage of orphans (80%) change their brush every 1-3 months
compared to their counterparts. 33.3% of orphans have snack more than twice daily compared to (16.7%) of non
orphans. About one fourth of orphans (23.3%) have never visited a dentist. On the other hand, (63.3%) of non-
orphans are attending dentist when in pain. (Table 1)

Table 1: Practices of study subjects regarding oral hygiene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Orphans</th>
<th>Non orphans</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How often do your primary care giver or guardians educate you regarding oral hygiene maintenance?</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>From time to time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphans</td>
<td>7 (23.3%)</td>
<td>5 (16.7%)</td>
<td>15 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non orphans</td>
<td>2 (6.7%)</td>
<td>4 (13.3%)</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>2. How many times a day do you clean your teeth?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphans</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>Twice daily or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>15 (50%)</td>
<td>12 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table (1) shows that 5 of the 10 questions regarding oral hygiene practices exhibited statistically significant difference between orphans and non-orphans.

Table (2): DMFT scores for the study and comparison groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social status</th>
<th>Debris Mean ± SD</th>
<th>Calculus Mean ± SD</th>
<th>OHI-S Mean ± SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orphans</td>
<td>.94 ± .44</td>
<td>.47 ± .33</td>
<td>1.4 ± .59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non orphans</td>
<td>.47 ± .27</td>
<td>.13 ± .23</td>
<td>.59 ± .39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (2) shows that the mean DMFT scores were higher among orphans with significant difference in the decayed teeth.
Table 3: OHI-S scores for the study and comparison groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social status</th>
<th>Decayed Teeth Mean ± SD</th>
<th>Missing Teeth Mean ± SD</th>
<th>Filled Teeth Mean ± SD</th>
<th>DMFT Mean ± SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orphans</td>
<td>4.23 ± 3.636</td>
<td>.17 ± .531</td>
<td>.87 ± 1.479</td>
<td>5.27 ± 3.947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non orphans</td>
<td>.90 ± 1.094</td>
<td>.23 ± .679</td>
<td>.90 ± 1.398</td>
<td>2.03 ± 2.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P-value

|          | 0.00 | 0.673 | 0.929 | 0.00 |

Table (3) shows that the mean OHI-S scores were higher among orphans. The scores were all significantly different between the 2 groups.

Figure (1): Distribution of study subjects according to the oral health status

Figure (1) shows that higher percentage of orphans (80%) has untreated decay as compared to their fellows. In addition, higher percentages of orphans (86.7%) are having calculus and require scaling of teeth.

Discussion:

Present study was conducted to assess the oral health status and practice among orphanage adolescents in comparison to non orphans. Our results cannot be generalized to the entire orphanage in Saudi Arabia because of the diverse culture, food pattern, geographic location, and other factors like delivered care by their administrations. In addition, orphans from birth up to 12 years of age are mostly adopted.

In this study, (50%) of orphans stated that the orphanage educate them from time to time about the oral health. However, a previous study in India\(^9\) showed that 82.5% of children did not receive appropriate information. A high statistically significant difference was found between the orphans and comparison group in regards to the frequency of brushing. About (67%) of non-orphans brush twice daily or more whilst (50%) of orphans are once daily brushers. Shanbhog, et al.\(^9\) reported in their study that it is compulsory for the orphans to brush twice daily there. Surprisingly, it was found that (80%) of the orphans in the present study had the habit of changing their toothbrush within 1-3 months. This could be related to the supplies the orphans get for free from the government. Contradictory results were found\(^10\) in which 70% of the orphans change their toothbrush within longer period of time which is every 6 months.

Higher percentages of orphans and non orphans were not using dental floss. This comes in accord with the findings of earlier studies\(^11, 12\). In contrast with the finding in San Francisco\(^13\), where 75% of the students used dental floss at least once a day.

Almost 44% of orphans were found to snack once daily. About 47% of non orphans were found to snack twice daily. Both groups consumed chocolate, sweets and chips. This finding of the study was in agreement with the
study carried out by Lonim Prasai Dixit et al.\(^{(14)}\), in Nepal in which 75% of the children consumed sugar rich foods once daily. There were only 3.3% of orphans who visited a dentist for regular checkups, 40% visited the dentist if they have an appointment and about one fourth of orphans (23.3%) have never visited a dentist in their life time. A higher percentage of the comparison group visited the dentist as compared to the orphan group where they might have received advice on preventive oral health care and instructions on how to brush their teeth properly. So, this could be one of the reasons of low caries scores found in orphans.

**Conclusion:**
1. Oral hygiene practices of orphans were worse than the non-orphan group, except for changing the tooth brush in which a significantly higher percentage of orphans are changing brush every 1-3 months.
2. Orphans had significantly higher DMFT score than non-orphans.
3. The orphan group had worse oral hygiene compared to the other group.

**Limitations and Recommendations:**
The sample was small because of lack of cooperation from some orphans, difficult access to the male orphans due to community mores and family adoption of most of orphans from birth until age 12.

We recommend further studies to include male orphans and orphans in other provinces. And to compare their oral health status with non-orphans in the region and look for causes and solve them. Most important point is the implementation of oral health education programs in orphanages as well as in schools. Also we recommend that each orphanage include dental clinic with complete dental team to increase awareness and oral health education, follow up and perform needed dental treatment for orphans.

**Acknowledgments:**
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**References:**