

ORAL HEALTH CARE AWARENESS AMONG DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN ATTENDING SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Background: Oral health is an important aspect of health for all children, and is more important for children with special health needs.

Aim: The study was done to assess the oral health status and oral hygiene awareness of differently abled children attending special schools in Chennai.

Materials and Method: A cross sectional study was conducted among 6 - 18 year old hearing and speech impaired children and visually impaired children in Chennai. A cluster sampling methodology was used for the selection of special schools in Chennai. All the children who met the inclusion criteria were included in the study. The final sample size for the study was 624 hearing and speech impaired children and 506 visually impaired children. The data was collected using WHO Assessment Form (WHO 1997) modified. Statistical analysis was done using Pearson chi-square test and Student t test.

Results: Overall 96% of children were brushing themselves, 14.1% of them were using side to side motion, 90.9% of them were brushing once daily, 96.5% of them used toothbrush and toothpaste, 62.4% of them were using soft bristles, 5.5% of them were rinsing their mouth after every meal. 8.1% of hearing and speech impaired children and 29% of visually impaired children had poor oral hygiene and the difference noted was statistically very highly significant ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusion: It can be concluded from the study that visually impaired children had poor oral hygiene compared to hearing and speech impaired children and most of their oral hygiene practices were not acceptable.

KEYWORDS: Differently, Vabled, Oral, Hygiene, Oral, Health, Status, Hearing, and, Speech Impaired, Visually, Impaired