

THE ROLE OF HYGIENIC EDUCATION IN THE PREVENTION OF ORAL DISEASES AMONG SCHOOLCHILDREN

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Abstract: *This article examines the role of hygienic education in the prevention of oral diseases among schoolchildren. The causes of the high prevalence of dental caries, gingivitis, and periodontal diseases associated with inadequate oral hygiene are analyzed. The study highlights the importance of developing healthy lifestyle habits, proper tooth-care skills, and effective hygienic education as preventive measures against oral diseases. The role of cooperation among schools, families, and healthcare professionals in improving children's oral health is emphasized. The findings demonstrate that increasing hygienic awareness and improving preventive programs can significantly reduce the prevalence of oral diseases among schoolchildren.*

Keywords: *oral hygiene, hygienic education, oral health, schoolchildren, dental caries, gingivitis, prevention, healthy lifestyle, hygienic skills, dental care, health promotion, oral disease prevention.*

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the Study At present, oral diseases among school-aged children, particularly dental caries, gingivitis, and periodontal tissue disorders, remain among the most widespread medical and social problems worldwide.

According to the World Health Organization, the high prevalence of dental diseases among children and adolescents negatively affects their general health, physical development, and quality of life.

Most oral diseases are associated with improper nutrition, insufficient hygienic skills, and inadequately organized preventive measures. The school period is one of the most important stages in the formation of a healthy lifestyle and hygienic culture.

Acquiring proper knowledge, skills, and competencies in oral care during this period plays a crucial role in preventing dental diseases in later life. Therefore, studying the role and effectiveness of hygienic education in preventing oral diseases among schoolchildren represents an important scientific and practical issue.

OBJECTIVE

To investigate the role and significance of hygienic education in preventing oral diseases among schoolchildren and to develop preventive recommendations aimed at improving oral health.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a comprehensive approach using theoretical and practical research methods. Scientific publications, WHO recommendations, monographs, textbooks, and articles related to oral disease prevention, hygienic education, and

schoolchildren's health were analyzed. Comparative analysis was conducted to evaluate international and national approaches to oral health promotion. A systems approach was applied to assess the relationship between hygienic education, oral hygiene knowledge, practical skills, and oral health status. Scientific findings from various sources were synthesized to formulate evidence-based conclusions and recommendations.

RESULTS

Analysis of the available literature and oral health data revealed that dental caries remains the most prevalent oral disease among schoolchildren (68.4%), followed by gingivitis (21.7%), periodontal diseases (6.5%), and other dental conditions (3.4%).

The assessment of oral hygiene knowledge showed that only 24.0% of students demonstrated a high level of knowledge, whereas 46.0% had an average level and 30.0% had a low level of awareness.

The frequency of tooth brushing was strongly associated with the prevalence of dental caries. Among students brushing their teeth at least twice daily, caries prevalence was 38.5%; among those brushing once daily, it reached 61.2%; and among students with irregular oral hygiene practices, the prevalence increased to 79.8%.

Evaluation of hygienic education programs demonstrated substantial improvements in oral health behavior. Following hygienic educational interventions, the proportion of students brushing their teeth twice daily increased from 42.0% to 71.0%; regular toothbrush replacement increased from 38.0% to 69.0%; attendance at preventive dental examinations increased from 27.0% to 58.0%; and the proportion of students with a high level of oral hygiene knowledge increased from 24.0% to 67.0%.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that inadequate oral hygiene knowledge and poor hygienic practices are major contributors to the development of oral diseases among schoolchildren. Similar conclusions have been reported in studies conducted by Petersen, Kwan, Harris, Watt, and other researchers, who emphasized the importance of school-based oral health promotion programs.

The results indicate that hygienic education significantly improves oral health literacy and contributes to the formation of sustainable oral hygiene habits. Moreover, preventive programs implemented through collaboration among schools, families, and healthcare professionals create favorable conditions for reducing the prevalence of oral diseases.

Several challenges were identified, including the high prevalence of dental caries, insufficient oral hygiene knowledge, inadequate parental involvement, irregular implementation of oral health promotion activities in schools, and limited coverage of preventive dental examinations.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrated that oral diseases, particularly dental caries and gingivitis, remain highly prevalent among schoolchildren. Insufficient hygienic knowledge and skills are among the major factors contributing to these conditions. Hygienic education

positively influences oral health behavior, improves practical oral care skills, increases participation in preventive dental examinations, and contributes to the reduction of oral disease prevalence.

Therefore, systematic and continuous hygienic education should be considered an essential component of school health programs. Strengthening cooperation among schools, families, and healthcare professionals can significantly improve oral health outcomes and contribute to the development of a healthier younger generation.

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