

Knowledge on Home-care Plaque Control Methods in Patients with Periodontal Disease: Findings from a Periodontal Clinic

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Plaque control is essential in the prevention of periodontal disease. The mainstay of plaque control is mechanical plaque removal. This signifies the important duty of dental professionals in educating patients on effective mechanical plaque removal on daily basis at home. This study assessed the knowledge of home-care plaque control methods in new patients attending the clinic, comparing the knowledge of those who had received some form of periodontal treatment within the last six months (test group) from any other dental clinic with those who had never received any periodontal care before (control). An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data which was analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were expressed by means of number, frequency and percentage. The level of statistical significance was considered at $p < 0.05$. The study included 81 patients. Test (n=34) and Control (n=47) subjects were comparable in terms of age, sex and education level. Majority used a toothbrush to clean the teeth (98.8%). 53% (n=18) in the test group had received previous treatment at private clinics while 29.4% of them mentioned that they didn't receive brushing instructions. Among those who received brushing instructions, a majority has had chair-side brushing demonstrations. Yet, none reported that they received education on supplementary plaque control tools. Although the test group had slightly higher knowledge mean score, the difference was not statistically significant. Among those who underwent periodontal treatment, a significant relationship was found between the knowledge mean score and the educational level ($p=0.031$). Within limitations of the study, the findings demonstrated gaps in patient instruction/patients' knowledge-acquisition. A patient's level of education may influence the knowledge-acquisition and retention of facts regarding plaque control instructions. Dental professionals would need to take effective measures to deliver adequate plaque control instructions to individual patients and recommend supplementary plaque control tools whenever necessary.

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