

# Unraveling Dental Myths: A Comprehensive Study on Prevalence and Awareness among General Populations

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## Abstract:-

### ➤ *Background:*

Dental myths are the misconceptions or false beliefs pertaining to oral health, dental care, and dental procedures. These myths can lead to incorrect practices or decisions regarding dental hygiene and treatment. Addressing dental myths proves essential for spreading accurate oral health information and assisting people in making informed decisions regarding their dental care.

### ➤ *Aims and Objectives:*

The Aim of this study was to assess the general public's understanding of dental myths and so promote awareness among them.

### ➤ *Study Design and Setting:*

The study was designed to assess the prevalence of dental myths among the general public through set of questionnaire that were converted into Google forms and shared to the participants via social network.

### ➤ *Materials and Methods:*

A questionnaire with demographic information and myths about dental health was delivered using Google forms. The online survey link was delivered via social media, and participants were asked to share it with their friends and family.

### ➤ *Results and Conclusion:*

The findings of this study suggest that people generally endorse numerous dental myths, which leads to poor oral health. This could be due to a lack of understanding and awareness of dental health and its importance. Thus Members of this population must be educated to understand the truths and take action to educate them about dental care.

**Keywords:-** Awareness, Dental Myths, Dental Education, Dental Misconceptions, Dentistry, Oral Health.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Health care has emerged as one of the India's most significant areas. It is expanding at a rapid pace owing to contributions from both private and public organizations. Health care is the most important goal for any country seeking its development. Despite developments in the health-care sector, many falsehoods persist in people's minds. <sup>[1]</sup>

Maintaining good oral health and cleanliness is a must for individuals of all ages to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Oral diseases have been more prevalent recently, according to reports, particularly in rich nations. Many countries are unable to meet the demand for dental treatment because of their inadequate health infrastructure and limited economics. <sup>[2]</sup>

Myths are traditional stories that often involve supernatural beings, god, or heroes and are used to explain natural phenomena, customs, or beliefs. Oral disease is the fourth most expensive disease to treat, causing a global burden in poor communities in both developing and wealthy countries. The primary contributors include social and cultural attitudes, stress, anxiety, and illiteracy. These myths are passed down from generation to generation, evoking strong emotions. People frequently choose to quacks when symptoms occur rather than to the dentist, reinforcing incorrect ideas. Various myths have been around since the past. <sup>[1]</sup>

Taking this background into consideration, a study investigating myths pertaining to dental healthcare among the general population was conducted, encompassing the importance of oral health.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS/METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to evaluate public awareness of dental myths. A cross-sectional questionnaire survey was carried out using participants chosen at random. There were 200 participants altogether for this study. Participants were guaranteed that their involvement in the study was entirely voluntary and informed about it. Participants were provided with a self-administered, structured questionnaire consisting of twenty two (22) English questions. The questionnaire covered demographic information, levels of

education, and substantive questions that probed respondent's knowledge of dental myths in the general population. <sup>[3-7]</sup> The questionnaire included both closed-ended (Yes/No) questions and questions with selectable response options. The participants were sent these questions via social media after they had been converted into Google forms. The information was gathered during a six-month period.

The participants were informed of the study's objectives and purpose along with a request to participate. Statistical analysis was performed on the data once it had been gathered of responses.

## III. RESULT

S. No	Question	Option	Frequency	Percent%
	Gender	Male	87	43.5
		Female	113	56.5
	Occupation	School	3	1.5
		College	145	72.5
		Working	52	26
	How often you have visited dentist?	Never	93	46.5
		Once a year	69	34.5
		Twice a year	21	10.5
		Often	17	8.5
	Brushing harder cleans your tooth better.	Yes	91	45.5
		No	109	54.5
	Extraction of teeth affects eye vision/Brain.	Yes	71	35.5
		No	129	64.5
	Tooth cleaning will weaken the tooth structure.	Yes	79	39.5
		No	121	60.5
	Brushing using salt or fine soil helps to make tooth white and shiny.	Yes	136	68
		No	64	32
	Eruption of third molar is associated with people's wisdom.	Yes	86	43
		No	114	57
	Stains of the tooth are due to eating brinjal and raw banana.	Yes	96	48
		No	104	52
	Front tooth malocclusion is considered as lucky.	Yes	88	44
		No	112	56
	Placing cloves will reduce tooth pain.	Yes	130	65
		No	70	35
	Children's teeth are temporary milk teeth and they don't need any treatment.	Yes	134	67
		No	66	33
	Gum diseases affect only older people.	Yes	67	33.5
		No	133	66.5
	Oral cancer occurs only in smokers.	Yes	90	45
		No	110	55
	Dental caries is caused by worms.	Yes	97	48.5
		No	103	51.5
	Throwing fallen teeth on roof top can lead to eruption of stronger permanent teeth.	Yes	77	38.5
		No	123	61.5
	Dental treatments are always painful.	Yes	98	49
		No	102	51
	Removal of teeth is the only treatment of choice for a decayed tooth.	Yes	104	52
		No	96	48

	Only older people get oral cancer.	Yes	52	26
		No	148	74
	Dental treatments always cost higher.	Yes	118	59
		No	82	41

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The knowledge and habits of oral hygiene can vary greatly amongst nations and communities, dependent upon traditions and socioeconomic status. <sup>[8]</sup> People from a broad variety of races, faiths, communities, castes, and socioeconomic origins live in India, a country where the majority of the population lives in rural areas. Myths, taboos, misunderstandings, and erroneous beliefs all have a direct correlation with this diversity. Oral diseases are more common in communities where oral health care delivery systems are not easily accessible. People are more likely to seek treatment from quacks and even try to use alternative medical and spiritual therapies rather than going to accredited dental specialists. <sup>[9]</sup>

The population's protective dental health behaviors are inversely correlated with traditional beliefs and taboos. In India, the general public exhibits a conspicuous lack of scientific dental awareness and ignorance, particularly among those who live in rural areas and have lower levels of education and dental awareness. Providing for dental health needs presents numerous obstacles for a growing nation such as India. Every person possesses certain myths and taboos. <sup>[10]</sup>

The general public's common misconceptions and taboos regarding dentistry are summarized by Harshini G. et al. Increasing people's awareness of these beliefs and the evidence behind them can help them to debunk the misunderstandings that have been perpetuated over time. <sup>[11]</sup>

Eventually the study's findings revealed a high frequency of dental myths, a noticeable lack of dental awareness, and a marked tendency towards ignorance in older, less educated, and female subjects. Even if dental treatment were made available to such persons, the significant prevalence of dental myths would prevent them from receiving the necessary care. Awareness campaigns should work hard to improve dental knowledge because these people might not be able or ready to travel for reasons relating to their health, finances, or motivation. <sup>[8]</sup>

The survey sample was fairly balanced between males (43.5%) and females (56.5%). This demographic balance allows for insights into differences or similarities in dental health beliefs and behaviors between genders. A significant majority were either college students (72.5%) or working individuals (26%). This demographic profile suggests a younger, possibly more educated sample, which might influence their dental health knowledge and beliefs.

Nearly half of the respondents (46.5%) reported never visiting a dentist. The survey identified several common misconceptions: A notable percentage (39.5%) believes that tooth cleaning weakens tooth structure. A majority (68%) believe in using substances like salt or soil for tooth whitening, which contrasts with dental science. Significant numbers believe in myths like tooth extraction affecting vision/brain (35.5%) or dental caries caused by worms (48.5%).

A majority (59%) believe dental treatments are costly, and nearly half (49%) believe they are always painful. These perceptions could deter individuals from seeking necessary dental care. Many have never visited a dentist (46.5%).

Some believe oral cancer is only in smokers (45%) or that gum disease only affects older people (33.5%).

There's a clear need for comprehensive oral health education to dispel myths and promote accurate knowledge. Tailored educational campaigns could address specific misconceptions like the causes of dental caries or the implications of traditional practices. Restrictions on Owing to the cross-sectional and observational style of the study design, data on the prevalence of dental myths could only be gathered. To fully eliminate myths, further longitudinal research is needed to determine the correlation between the risk variables involved.

Considering myths that are primarily found in small groups of people. Yet a wide range of myths can be researched that are universally applicable.

Future research could benefit from concentrating on a more qualitative analysis of the public's understanding of the fundamentals of oral health, disease, and cleanliness, as well as testing strategies to change the public's attitude towards oral health.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The current study's findings indicate that, despite many efforts to inform patients about medical concerns, common people continue to believe myths. The most effective strategy to get over it is to implement a focused campaign to promote scientific dentistry procedures. Primary school students can be educated about basic dental hygiene concepts and principles as part of an education effort to eliminate these beliefs at the source.

There is a greater proportion of people who, within the limits of the current study, yet hold myths about dentistry. Therefore, it is the primary responsibility of dentists to assist the public in learning through health programmes, public service announcements, educational brochures, and even online courses.

- **Conflicts of Interest:** There are no conflicts of interest.

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