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**Knowledge and practices on oral hygiene among adults in Udapalatha MOH area
(Gampola East), Sri Lanka**

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Persistent oral inflammation is intricately connected to overall health, serving as a reflection of systemic physiological processes. Over 100 systemic conditions, including respiratory infections, pancreatic cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and nutritional deficiencies, are associated with oral health issues. Understanding of oral health is crucial in promoting effective oral hygiene practices. This research aimed to investigate socio-demographic factors influencing oral hygiene among adults in the Udapalatha MOH area (Gampola East), Sri Lanka, and to assess the correlation between knowledge and practices related to oral hygiene. A cross-sectional study was conducted to assess the level of knowledge and practice and to assess sociodemographic factors associated with the knowledge and practices on oral hygiene among 322 adults of the selected MOH area using an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Ethical clearance was obtained from the National Institute of Health Science, Kalutara, Sri Lanka. Pearson correlation, Chi-square test, independent sample t-test, and One-way ANOVA were used in the data analysis. The majority (61.2%) of the respondents were females. The study results showed that 57.1% (n=184) and 50.6% (n=163) of the sample had good knowledge and practices towards oral hygiene, respectively. Good knowledge is significantly associated with males (p= 0.0065), smokers (p<0.001), alcohol consumers (p<0.001), participants with their own house (p<0.001), and participants who have a vehicle (p<0.001). Good knowledge level was observed in participants with a non-vegetarian diet when compared with the mean values of vegetarian diet p=0.001(p<0.05) and mixed diet p=0.001(p<0.05). Good practice is significantly associated with females (p= 0.002), non-smokers (p<0.001) non-alcohol consumers (p= 0.021). The majority of the participants had a satisfactory level of both knowledge and practices towards good oral hygiene. The findings of the study also suggest that there exists a lack of awareness or awareness coupled with negligence towards oral health issues and therefore, there is a need for raising awareness and motivating people about the issues surrounding oral health. The findings that have emerged in the study suggest a critical gap that the audience and healthcare institutions fail to address. They should use public health and educational activities for groups in places that are not easily accessible to serve as information tools on dental health and proper oral hygiene. Furthermore, there is a possibility that the media will help people learn more about dental issues and attend dental check-ups more often. Furthermore, for health the environment, and culture to prevail, we have to enlighten the illiterates in society today. Thus, the knowledge of basic and advanced oral health practices, apart from the existing oral care measures such as mouth rinses, dental floss, etc., is lacking among study subjects in this region and they require to be enlightened more on the importance of basic preventive and curative oral health care facilities by introducing general oral health awareness programs for them.

Keywords: Adults, Knowledge, Oral hygiene, Practices