

Patients Awareness and Attitude towards Dental Pain

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Abstract: This research is a descriptive study using a cross sectional descriptive survey to study awareness of patients and attitude towards dental pain among the local community of Saudi Arabia. The research objectives are to assess the attitude, awareness, and oral health knowledge of local community towards dental pain. Secondly, to evaluate the effectiveness of patients' action towards dental pain. Thirdly, to understand the level of patients' awareness and behavior in dealing with dental pain before seeking professional help. The study collected information from 135 participants who visited clinics of Riyadh Colleges of Dentistry and Pharmacy in Munsiyah campus in Saudi Arabia. The results indicated that dental pain (37.8%) and routine checkup (37.8%) were the most common causes for visiting the dental clinic. Fear from dental treatment was the major cause preventing the patients from seeking dental treatment when they feel pain (34.8%). When they feel pain, (28.1%) used to take medications to relieve the pain and minority of them used to utilize non-medication methods (8.1%). Panadol (40%) and Profen (42.2%) were the most commonly used analgesic when feeling dental pain. For those using non-medication methods for relieving the pain, clove was the most commonly used method (31.1%) followed by water and salt (28.1%). **Method:** The research was designed as descriptive study using a cross sectional descriptive survey. The survey had 18 questions that were written originally in Arabic to help ease the collection of data because the majority of the expected target samples were Arabians. The questionnaire was designed to measure actions of patients in curing their dental pain before seeking professional assistance. In addition, another section of the questionnaire involved questions regarding the awareness of patients towards dental pain and its effect on general oral health. **Participants and Procedure:** A number of 180 questionnaires had been distributed among adult patients who visited Riyadh Colleges of Dentistry and Pharmacy clinics in Munsiyah campus. The study was conducted after gaining the approval from the Ethical Committee of Riyadh Colleges of Dentistry and Pharmacy. Patients' acceptance and signature on filling the questionnaire is considered as an informed consent. The patients were asked to fill the questionnaire in the clinic screening area before their initial examination, after short explanation about the aims of the study and getting their consent to participate. One of the research team members was with the patient during filling of the questionnaire in order to answer any doubt by the patient regarding the questions. The data collection started on 27 March - 15 May 2016. **Conclusion:** According to the results of this study, we concluded that there is insufficient awareness of the adult patients about dealing with dental pain. Dental pain (37.8%) and routine checkup (37.8%) were the most common causes for visiting the dental clinic. Fear from dental treatment was the major cause preventing the patients from seeking dental treatment when they feel pain (34.8%). When they feel pain, (28.1%) used to take medications to relieve the pain and minority of them used to utilize non-medication methods (8.1%). Panadol (40%) and Profen (42.2%) were the most commonly used analgesic when feeling dental pain. For those using non-medication methods for relieving the pain, clove was the most commonly used method (31.1%) followed by water and salt (28.1%).

Keywords: awareness, attitude, dental pain, analgesics

1. Introduction

Dental pain is considered as one of the most commonly body pain. At the same time, most of the patients are afraid to visit the dental clinics due to different reasons. "Pain is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon that requires comprehensive and ongoing assessment and effective management" [1]. Individual attitude towards dental pain depends on many factors such as, lifestyle, his/her experience, cultural values, financial status, time and the influence of his/her surroundings [2]. Some patients seek professional help after a certain degree of pain, while others prefer using different methods. Patients believe that those methods are curative factors upon encountering dental pain or they would find alternative ways to deal with pain rather than seeking professional help due to dental phobia. In a study conducted by [3], he found out that the majority of respondents ultimately sought pain relief from a dentist and that the initial strategies focused on nonprescription medicines (home remedies and prayer). There are behavioral impacts of pain and the most common ones were "consulting a dentist or doctor, avoiding certain foods, taking medication, and disturbance of sleep" [4]. "Therefore increasing awareness and knowledge is very crucial in order

to avoid many diseases and complications" [2].

"Dental problems are commonly encountered in our lives, some of the common problems are toothache, bleeding gums and halitosis" [5]. "Toothache is a subjective oral health indicator that should become uncommon when oral health is improving" [6]. Self-care is considered one way that allows people take care of their oral hygiene health problems [7]. According to [8], need is one of the major factors that promotes people to use self-care behaviors. He additionally stated that, "Although oral pain does increase the use of self-care behaviors, so do bleeding gums and dry mouth". Research and practice should address self-care behaviors used by patients for oral health problems in addition to pain. Investigators should expand analysis of dental self-care behavior and the relationship of self-care behavior to the use of professional services" [8]. This research investigates awareness of patients and attitude towards dental pain among the local community of Saudi Arabia.

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Aim and Objectives

- To assess the attitude, awareness, and oral health knowledge of local community towards dental pain.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of patients action towards dental pain.
- To understand the level of patients awareness and behavior in dealing with dental pain before seeking professional help.

2. Methodology

Method

The research was designed as descriptive study using a cross sectional descriptive survey. The survey had 18 questions that were written originally in Arabic to help ease the collection of data because the majority of the expected target samples were Arabians. The questionnaire was designed to measure actions of patients in curing their dental pain before seeking professional assistance. In addition, another section of the questionnaire involved questions regarding the awareness of patients towards dental pain and its effect on general oral health.

Participants and Procedure

A number of 180 questionnaires had been distributed among adult patients who visited Riyadh Colleges of Dentistry and Pharmacy clinics in Munsiyah campus. The study was conducted after gaining the Approval from Ethical Committee of Riyadh Colleges of Dentistry and Pharmacy. Patients acceptance and signature on filling the questionnaire is considered as an informed consent. The patients were asked to fill the questionnaire in the clinic screening area before their initial examination. After short explanation about the aims of the study and getting their consent to participate. One of the research team members was with the patient during filling of the questionnaire in order to answer any doubt by the patient regarding the questions. The data collection started on 27 March -15 May 2016.

3. Results

Out of the 180 questionnaire a number of 135 were filled by the patients. The average age of the participants is 28 years. The gender distribution is shown in (Figure 1).

The first question in our questionnaire was "what is your reason for visiting the clinic", the patients answers were (37.8%) for check up, (37.8%) for toothache and (14.8%) for cosmetic reasons (Figure 2). And then we asked if they suffered from pain in the last 24 months, (63%) their answer was yes and (37%) answered no. Considering patients routine dental visits, they were asked if they go regularly to dentist or when just feeling pain, and we found out that the majority of the patients seek dentist when they feel pain (51.1%), and some go irregularly to the dentist (33.3%), while minority (9.6%) go for routine dental visits regularly, and a very few number (5.9%) go to the dentist when noticing some problems like food accumulation or bleeding gum. We also found that patients had different opinions on their preference not to go to the dentist, their main reason was fear of pain during dental treatment (34.8%), followed by financial reasons (21.5%), some other reasons were fear

of needle pain, drilling sound, while others had different options (Figure 3). And then we asked them about their pain severity and how they manage it, "what will you do if you felt a toothache -moderate to severe-" the majority of them choose to go to a dentist (56.3%) and (28.1%) choose to take a pain killer while (8.1%) preferred the non-medication method (Figure 4). Regarding the pain killers, Profen was the highly preferred medication (42.2%), and (40%) for Panadol (Table 1). Now coming to the non-medication methods for relieving pain, based on patients answers, clove was the most non-medication method for relieving pain (31.1%), and (28.1%) of patients prefer to use 'water and salt' (Figure 5). We took into consideration their use of medication and non-medication methods, and it turned out that (71.1%) will go to the dentist to solve the problem as soon as possible, while (28.9%) choose to continue the same method.

When we asked them regarding painless caries, the majority of patients (74.1%) prefer to treat their teeth before caries cause pain, while some (16.3%) prefer to wait until pain takes place, and the minority of patients (8.9%) prefer to see another dentist. We also took into consideration patients action concerning temporary treatment, which lead to disappearance of the pain and it turned out that (70.4%) will come back to the next visit, while (14.8%) will not return to the next visit while not feeling pain and (14.8%) will come back in case of problem such as (abscess – pain – loss of restoration). In an effort to understand the patients action towards pain lasting for few seconds when drinking hot or cold drinks, we asked what will you do, and we found out that (47.4%) of them will go to the dentist when pain lasts for a long time, and (40.7%) said that the pain is normal and it doesn't need any visit to the dentist, while (11.9%) will go straight to the dentist. In case of pulp inflammation causing severe persistence pain, we asked them what are the treatment options they prefer, a significant number (80%) of patients prefer to undergo endodontic treatment and preserve their teeth, while some (20%) prefer to extract their teeth rather than going through multiple endodontic treatment visits. Regarding endodontic treatment, we asked a question "After Endodontic treatment (you felt pain after returning from the clinic) what will you do?" (57.8%) their answer was, wait for few days for pain to subside while using pain killers, while (42.2%) answered that they will go back to the dentist in the same or next day. We asked the patients questions concerning their awareness towards dental pain (Table 2)(Table 3) (Figure 6).

4. Discussion

Pain in the oral cavity could be dental and non-dental origin. This pain could be early alarm for some condition that may progress to more severe conditions such as abscess, cellulitis, sinusitis... etc. Patients should be aware about the importance of visiting dentist when feeling such pain and they should know that neglecting this pain may result in a worse scenario.

Our study showed that the majority of the participants seek dental treatment when they feel dental pain or for routine checkup which indicates a positive thinking. But some still use other non-medical methods for relieving the pain. The use of remedies is very common in public in treating many health problems but regarding dental pain their use is not

very wide among our study population and clove was most commonly used type.

Most of the available remedies-sold in shops- are prepared locally without any scientific testing about their effects or side effects. Some preparation may contain other additives with some harmful effect. The use of natural home remedies for relieving dental pain is not completely prohibited but the source and content should be clear for the patient. Fear of dental visit was the most common cause preventing the participants from seeking dental treatment when feeling pain. Patients should be aware that trying to stop dental pain at home is advocated using non-opioid analgesic, but at the same time they should know the importance of visiting the dentist to investigate and treat the existing problem and drugs such as Profen and Panadol should only be used as an adjunct to the dental treatment.

5. Conclusion

According to the results of this study, we concluded that there is insufficient awareness of the adult patients about dealing with dental pain. Dental pain (37.8%) and routine checkup (37.8%) was the most common causes for visiting the dental clinic. Fear from dental treatment was the major cause preventing the patients from seeking dental treatment when they feel pain (34.8%). When they feel pain, (28.1%) used to take medications to relief the pain and minority of them used to utilize non-medication methods (8.1%). Panadol(40%) and Profen(42.2%) were the most commonly used analgesic when feeling dental pain. For those using non-medication methods for relieving the pain, clove was the most commonly used method (31.1%) followed by water and salt (28.1%).

6. Recommendation

From the information we gathered from the patients about their attitude to dental pain and their different ways of managing pain, the current knowledge about their oral health is not clear due to lack of awareness of the right methods of dealing with their pain.

Dental professionals should emphasize on improving level of awareness of local community about the proper way of dealing with dental pain. This could be accomplished through community educational programs to prevent future complications that could occur due to improper actions in dealing with dental pain. When toothache takes place, individuals should seek professionals help rather than relying on their own believes. Further studies should be

conducted to evaluate the level of awareness of the patients regarding other oral health problems.

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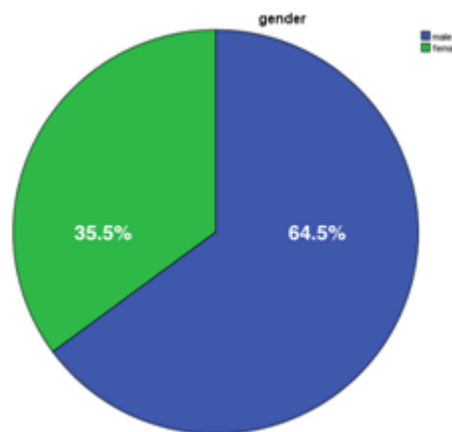


Figure 1: Gender distribution of study population

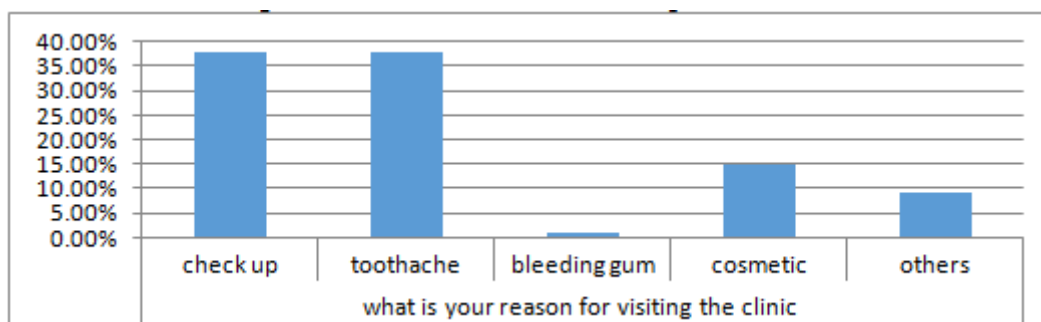


Figure 2: The main reason of the visiting dental clinics

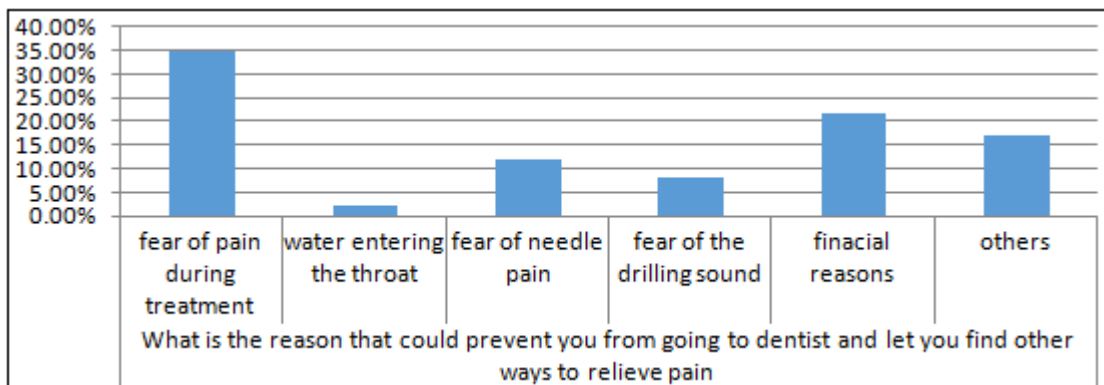


Figure 3: Reasons preventing the patients from visiting dentist when feeling pain

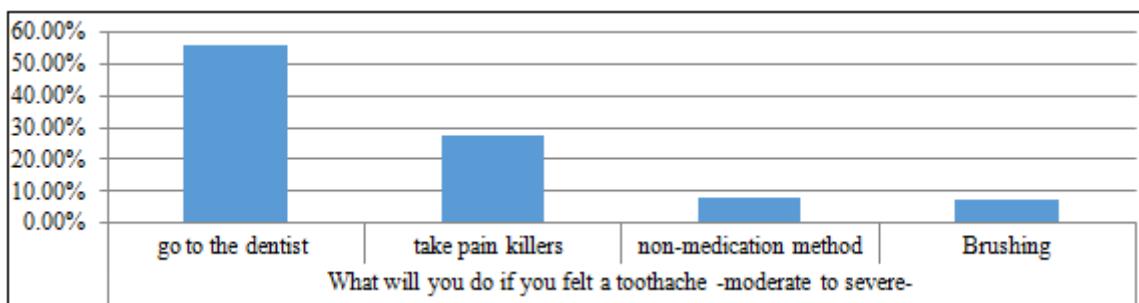


Figure 4: Patients reaction for feeling dental pain

Table 1: Type of analgesics the patients use when feeling dental pain

	Panadol	Profen	Asprin	Fevadol	Other	Missing	Total
Frequency	54	57	4	7	9	4	135
Percentage	40%	42.2%	3%	5.2%	6.6%	3%	100%

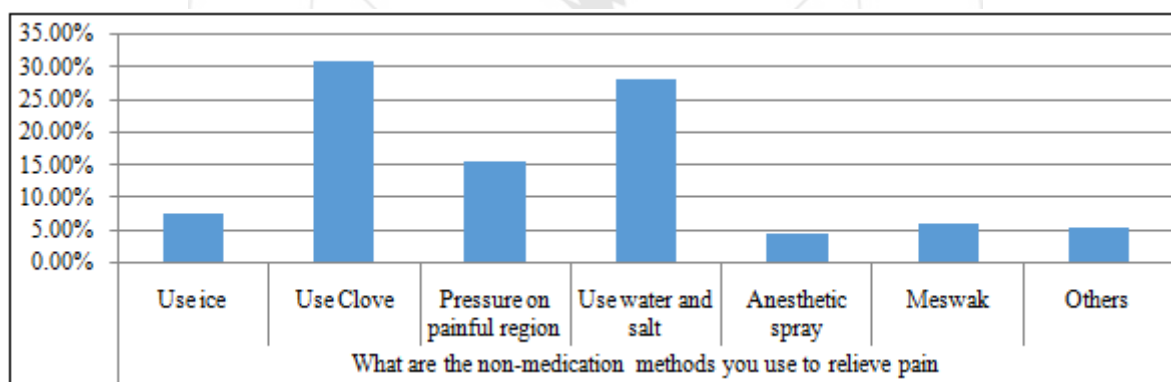


Figure 5: Non medical methods the patients use to relieve the dental pain

Table 2: Patient awareness to some aspects related to dental pain

	Yes	No	I don't know
Do you think ear pain is caused by toothache	42.2%	20.8%	37%
Do you think wisdom tooth problems could cause headache	72.6%	7.4%	20%
Do you think sinusitis could cause toothache	17.8%	32.6%	49.6%

Table 3: Patients view to post endodontic pain

	The endodontic treated tooth can't cause pain again	Usually the pain will be from the adjacent tooth	The endodontic treated tooth can be the cause of pain
After endodontic treatment, the dentist placed permanent restoration and you felt pain after few months, do you think the endodontic treated tooth could be the source of the pain	31.3%	30.9%	37.8%

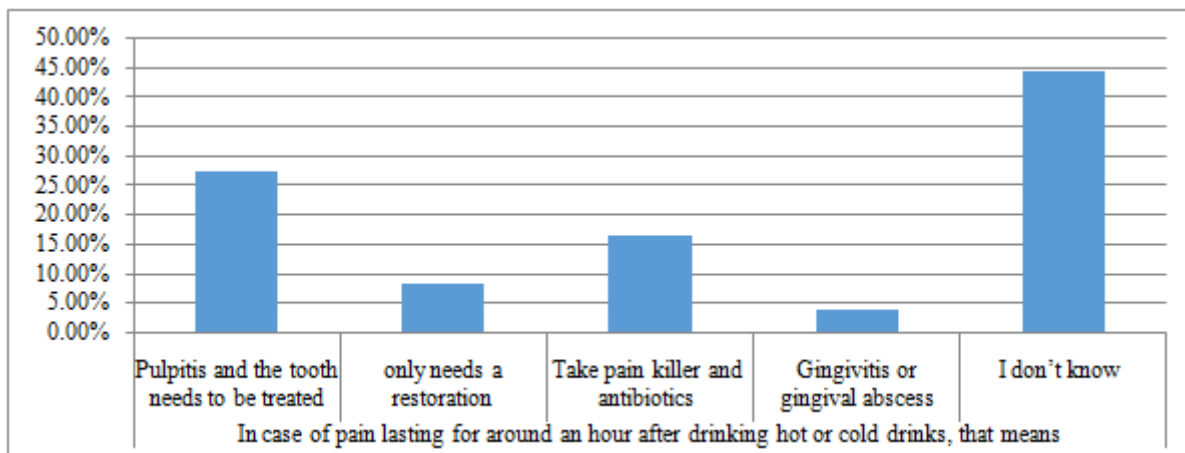


Figure 6: Patients knowledge about dental pain duration and required management

