

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES TOWARDS ORAL HYGIENE AMONG A COHORT OF 2ND YEAR UNDERGRADUATES ATTACHED TO NON-MEDICAL FACULTIES IN UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYAWARDENEPURA

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Oral health is a state of being free from chronic mouth and facial pain, oral sores, oral and throat cancers, birth defects, periodontal (gum) diseases, tooth decay, tooth loss and other disorders that affect the oral cavity. Unhealthy diet, use of tobacco and alcohol, poor oral hygiene, specific infections are among the many causes affecting oral health. Young adults are a risk group of people for oral diseases since most of them are known to engage in tobacco smoking, alcohol use and have the risk behavior of getting exposed to Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). This study assesses the knowledge, attitudes/beliefs and practices towards oral hygiene among a selected group of undergraduates attached to non-medical faculties in University of Sri Jayawardenepura. A quantitative cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted using a self-administered questionnaire. Data was analyzed

using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Total sample number was 341. Majority (78.9%) showed adequate knowledge. Almost all (97.5%) participants had positive attitude towards oral hygiene. 74.8% in both sexes had moderate practices towards oral hygiene. It also showed that there is a significant correlation (Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level) between knowledge and attitude while there is no significant correlation between knowledge and practices and the attitudes and practices. Although knowledge was adequate and their attitudes were positive towards the oral hygiene, most of them showed only moderate practices which could affect oral health leading to oral diseases. Gum bleeding, presence of white sticky deposits on teeth, presence of bad breath was seen in more than half of the participants.

Keywords: Oral Hygiene, Knowledge, Practices