

# Oral hygiene practices & habits among dental professionals of orthodontics & clinical departments

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** An essential part of the health of an individual is the health of his oral cavity. Different ways are devised to achieve this goal. Dentists are the part of the community with the best knowledge about it. The objective of the study was to investigate the oral health practices that dentists perform and preach to their patients in clinical departments of de'Montmorency College of Dentistry/Punjab Dental Hospital, Lahore.

**Materials & Methods:** A manual questionnaire was made and was filled by the dentists of Punjab Dental Hospital anonymously to determine the objective.

**Results:** A total of 181 dentists were enquired about their oral health practices. 63% of them brush twice a day. About 49% perform flossing at least once a week. 23% use a mouthwash at least once a week and 87% are satisfied with their oral hygiene.

**Conclusion:** It was concluded that most of the dentists are well aware of the practices and habits that are required to keep their oral cavity healthy and are also advising their patients to act on them.

**Keywords:** Oral hygiene; orthodontics; dental professionals, oral hygiene practices

## Introduction

Overall health of a person. Oral hygiene is an important part of the area from which everything we eat and drink enter the body.<sup>1</sup> So, the better the health of it, the better impact it'll have on the entire body. A lack of good oral hygiene leads to various problems which include cavities in teeth, gum swelling, bleeding from gums, gum recession, bone recession and eventually tooth loss can occur.<sup>2,3</sup> Oral hygiene importance is a key not only for oral tissues well-being but it is also very important in

overall health of an individual and for psychological well-being of all the individuals.<sup>4</sup>

Being a developing country, Pakistan does not have the resources to give enough dentists or services to its population that will be enough to keep the standard of oral health at an acceptable level.<sup>4</sup> Majority of the population only goes for checkups when they encounter a rather severe problem of teeth or gums and the concept of regular visits for prophylaxis is nonexistent.<sup>5</sup> Hence, much of the burden of educating the masses falls onto the dentists. Dentists being the experts in having the knowledge to maintain oral health should know the basic techniques for this purpose as they have the responsibility of educating the patients they treat and the society they live in. As a person practices what he knows and preaches the same, it is important to know what methods are used by the dentists themselves to keep the oral health

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at a disease free state as well as other habits that they adapt to help in this goal.<sup>6-10</sup>

Various methods are recommended to keep the oral cavity healthy. These include brushing twice a day with a fluoridated toothpaste, using floss to keep the interdental areas clean and a mouthwash to keep plaque levels low.<sup>11-15</sup> Moreover, it is seen that consuming less sugary things helps in prevention of caries and not taking any snacks between meals accomplishes the same goal.

This research is conducted on the dentists working at this time in Punjab Dental Hospital, Lahore. It explores the practices and habits that dentists perform to keep their oral health in a good state. It also navigates the aspect of advising the patients how to perform these activities for a better oral health.

## Material and Methods

After getting the ethical clearance from the relevant departments, the study was conducted on the House Officers and Post Graduate Residents working at that time in Punjab Dental Hospital, Lahore.

To find out the oral hygiene practices, a questionnaire was made that inquired about their habits of brushing, flossing, using a mouthwash and any other method to improve their oral hygiene that they may use. A total of 181 dentists were inquired about this using the questionnaire. The data collection was done from 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## Result

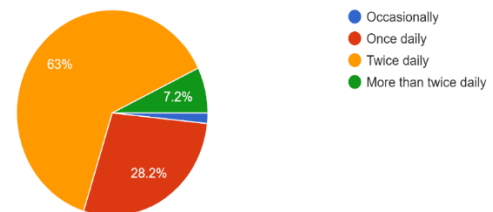
Of the 181 dentists, 63% brushed twice daily, whereas 28% brushed once daily.

Of the 63% that brush twice a day, 35 (29.6%) do it for 1 minute, 49 (41.5%) do it for 2 minutes whereas 21 (17.7%) do it for 2-5 minutes. Whereas from the 28% that brush once daily 16 (31.3%) do it 1 minute, 20 (39.2%) do it for 2 minutes and 13 (25.4%) do it for 2-5 minutes.

Almost 40% don't use floss whereas 19.3% use it once a week. Almost 77% either don't use a mouthwash or only use it occasionally. 79% of them don't use any other oral hygiene aid. Of the 21% that use some other aid most of them use a tooth pick or an interdental brush. 28% take snacks between almost every meal. 87.3% dentists are satisfied with their oral hygiene.

How often do you brush your teeth?

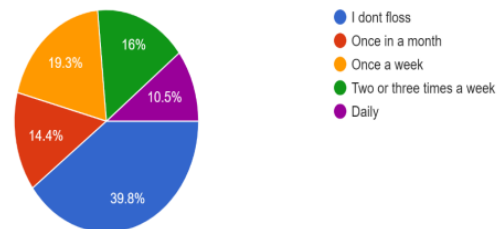
181 responses



**Figure 1: Showing frequency of brushing**

How frequently do you floss your teeth?

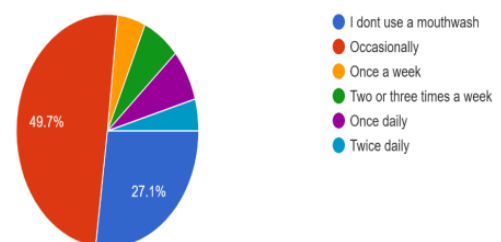
181 responses



**Figure 2: Showing frequency of using floss**

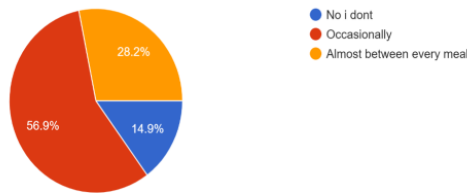
How often do you use mouthwash?

181 responses



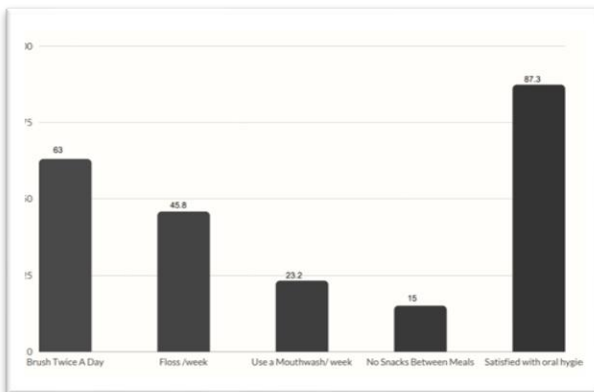
**Figure 3: Showing frequency of using a mouthwash.**

Do you take snacks between meals?  
181 responses



**Figure 4: Showing frequency of snacks taken between meals**

Following is a summary of results compiled as at least once a week categories



**Figure 5: Showing results in frequency of at least once a week.**

## Discussion

The significance of oral hygiene is very important as got clinical implications in all the clinical departments of dentistry. Using oral hygiene care habits should be considered a daily essential by most of the dentists and shall be done at recommended times e.g. after meals, using proper recommended techniques. The dental professionals also play important role in educating the masses, which come to them as their patients, about the various methods and habits that will help them achieve a healthy oral cavity.

It was observed in this study that although the percentage of dentists that recommend twice daily brushing to their patients were 88.4 %, but when it came to following this practice themselves only 63% of the dentists brush twice daily. Similarly, 60% of the

dentists advised their patients to floss but when it came to flossing themselves only 45.8 % perform flossing at least once a week whereas only 10% do it as a daily routine. It is observed that dentists being more aware of their oral hygiene and problems associated with it are more vigilant about these practices and perform these oral hygiene aids as needed but consider these practices essential for the patients as they are less informed about these things.<sup>4-7</sup>

Despite not acting on all the practices that were discussed at the start, it was seen that the awareness to follow those which were necessary for their own oral health was present as dentists were found to be using interdental brushes and tooth picks as aids to keep the oral cavity clean. It was majorly performed by those undergoing orthodontic treatment or those who had crowding of teeth. The areas where regular oral health aid instruments are difficult to use were cleaned by these additional tools.<sup>9-11</sup>

The duration for which the dentists perform brushing is also an interesting aspect of the study. It is seen that the dentists that perform this act twice daily usually do it for one or two minutes and only a small portion of them do it for 2-5 minutes. Whereas of those that brush once a day, the percentage doing brushing for 2-5 minutes was found to be greater as compared to those who do brushing twice a day. So, it was observed that the frequency was somewhat compensated by the duration of the technique. The standard recommended brushing time is 2-5 minutes.<sup>10</sup> Using a mouthwash and flossing are not considered a daily essential by most of the dentists and are done only at times of necessity as the results of the survey showed. Most dentists were found aware of the fact the having snacks between meals leads to increased chances of caries. A large number of dentists only do this occasionally whereas those who do it, it may seem they compensate it by their oral hygiene techniques.

The present study found that the majority of the dentists know the basic techniques for

adequate oral health and are acting on their knowledge to attain the goal. This was shown by the overwhelming 87.3% of the dentists who were satisfied with their oral hygiene.

## Conclusions

The study revealed that majority of the dentists (87%) were aware of the needs of their oral cavity and acted accordingly to keep its health at an optimum level. Another conclusion was that dental professionals are also educating the masses, which come to them as their patients, about the various methods and habits that will help them achieve a healthy oral cavity.

## Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

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