

Perception of Orthodontics

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of this study is to determine the factors that influence the desire for orthodontic treatment among outpatients of Saveetha Dental College. **Materials and Methods:** A questionnaire was prepared and handed out to 100 random outpatients of Saveetha Dental College. The questionnaire contained four questions, of which the last one pertained to the reason for not undergoing orthodontic treatment. **Results:** Of 100 people, 23% were not aware of the treatment options available, 16% were not interested, 14% felt they did not have time to spare, 14% said they would start treatment soon, 11% felt they could not afford the treatment, 9% were satisfied with their appearance and did not feel the need to undergo any treatments, 5% had fear of dentists, 4% had a fear of pain, 3% felt they were too old to start any treatment now, and 1% felt it would cause discomfort while eating. **Conclusion:** From the above study, it can be concluded that lack of awareness is the main factor that keeps people away from undergoing orthodontic treatment. Self-perception of orthodontic treatment motivated only a small percentage of the study population.

Keywords: Dental anomalies, orthodontics, perception

INTRODUCTION

A malocclusion is defined as an irregularity of the teeth or a malrelationship of the dental arches beyond the range of what is accepted as normal.^[1] Maloccluded teeth can cause psychosocial problems related to impaired dentofacial esthetics.^[2] There is a need to identify the awareness levels of people with respect to oral health and the orthodontic treatment as it would play an important role in inculcating healthy lifestyle practices to last for a lifetime. The benefits of orthodontic treatment are prevention of tissue damage, improvement in esthetics, and physical function. The uptake of orthodontic treatment is influenced by the desire to look attractive, self-esteem, and self-perception of dental appearance.^[3] There are various factors which influence the desire to undergo orthodontic treatment. However, it all depends on how the patients perceive orthodontics. Perception is defined as the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted. In orthodontics, perception deals with the way this field of dentistry is seen by the people. Some consider the correction of malocclusion a necessity to achieve proper esthetics while few consider it as an unimportant health condition and few are concerned with problems regarding difficulty in speech, mastication, etc.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A questionnaire was prepared consisting of four questions and handed out to 100 random outpatients of Saveetha Dental College. The only exclusion criteria were the positive history of any previous orthodontic treatment. The questionnaires were filled and duly collected, and the responses were noted. The questionnaire is as given in Figure 1.

RESULTS

Out of 100 respondents, 50 were female, and 50 were male. 71% of the respondents said that they were aware of the irregularities in their teeth while 29% were unaware. 46% have visited a dentist regarding their teeth alignment while 56% have not done so. Nearly 46% aware that there were various methods available to correct the alignment of teeth whereas 54% were not aware.

Of 100 people, 23% were not aware of the treatment options available, 16% were not interested, 14% felt they did not have

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time to spare, 14% said they would start treatment soon, 11% felt they could not afford the treatment, 9% were satisfied with their appearance and did not feel the need to undergo any treatments, 5% had fear of dentists, 4% had a fear of pain, 3% felt they were too old to start any treatment now, and 1% felt it would cause discomfort while eating.

Name/பெயர்:	Age/வயது:
Mobile No/மொபைல் எண்:	Sex/பாலினம்:

1) Are you aware that you are having irregular teeth?
நீங்கள் உங்கள் பற்கள் சீராக இல்லாமல் இருப்பதை உணர்ந்துள்ளீர்களா?

2) Have you visited a dentist regarding your teeth alignment?
நீங்கள் உங்கள் பற்கள் சீரமைப்பு தொடர்பாக பல் மருத்துவரிடம் சென்றது உண்டா?

3) Are you aware of the various treatment options that are available to correct your teeth alignment? Yes No
நடவள்கள் பற்களை சீரமைக்க பல்வேறு சிகிச்சைகள் இருப்பது தெரியுமா? ஆம் இல்லை

4) Why have you not started treatment for teeth alignment?
ஏன் இன்னும் நீங்கள் பற்கள் சீரமைப்பு சிகிச்சை ஆரம்பிக்கவில்லை?

Signature/ கையொப்பம்:

நன்றி

Thank you for sparing your valuable time.

Figure 1: Questionnaire.

DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was given to 100 random outpatients of Saveetha Dental College. Of 100 people, 23% were not aware of the treatment options available, 16% were not interested, 14% felt they did not have time to spare, 14% said they would start treatment soon, 11% felt they could not afford the treatment, 9% were satisfied with their appearance and did not feel the need to undergo any treatments, 5% had fear of dentists, 4% had a fear of pain, 3% felt they were too old to start any treatment now, and 1% felt it would cause discomfort while eating as seen in Figure 2.

The majority of the people were unaware of the fact that their misaligned teeth could be corrected which mainly indicates a lack of knowledge about dental anomalies and their treatments as seen in Figure 3. Those who were not interested showed that they do not perceive misaligned teeth as a dental problem. A considerable amount of people perceived orthodontics as expensive and felt that they would not be able to afford the cost of the orthodontic treatment. While a few people had responded that they would start orthodontic treatment soon, there were

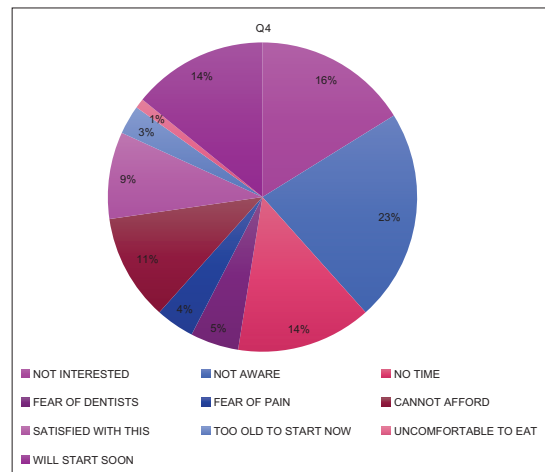


Figure 2: Graph of response for Q4.

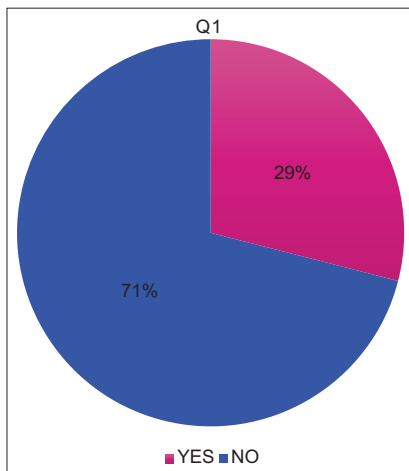


Figure 3: Graph of response for Q1.

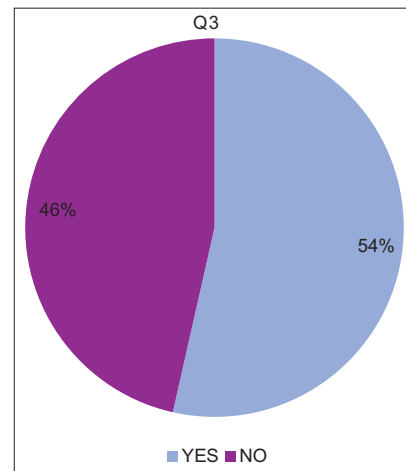


Figure 4: Graph of response for Q3.

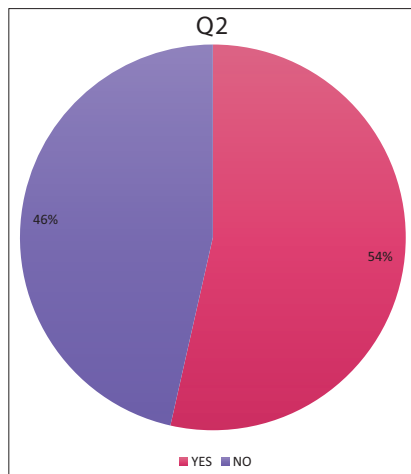


Figure 5: Graph of response for Q2.

few who did not perceive their malocclusion as an esthetic or dental problem and responded that they were satisfied with their appearances. While there were few who perceived that the treatment would be painful, there were those who perceived dentists as being fearful [Figure 4].

The significance of patients' perceptions regarding orthodontic treatment cannot be underrated as it is the patients who receive treatment and need to achieve gratification from enhanced esthetics and function.^[4]

It had been postulated that improved experience with and accessibility of orthodontic service should be deciphered into differences in esthetics rating and perception of treatment need [Figure 5].^[5]

The decision-making process that a person commences when mediating his/her own dental esthetic gratification may be broken down into several steps. First to know about the awareness about their own dentition after this step, second, their self-satisfaction, and last their attitude concerning orthodontic treatment.

Regarding self-satisfaction about their teeth, the study indicates that the subjects did make fairly accurate self-evaluation of their own malocclusions. The unsatisfied subjects with their dental esthetics had a positive attitude toward orthodontic treatment. The satisfied subjects with their dental esthetics were aware of the attractiveness of their teeth.

The subjects who had malocclusion and did not report to the orthodontic clinic seem to believe that teeth do not affect their esthetic value and this gives the impression that it is more of

ignorance that teeth do significantly affect facial appearance and absence of knowledge was the prime factor that kept away from treatment.^[6]

Kerosuo *et al.* study established that access to free of cost orthodontic treatment was probable to impact the treatment rate, whereas it did not seem to influence the self-perceived need for treatment.^[6]

A similar study conducted by Helm *et al.* proposed that certain malocclusions specifically conspicuous occlusal and space anomalies may undesirably affect body image and self-concept not only at adolescence but also in adulthood.^[7]

The main limitation of this study was the relatively small sample size.

CONCLUSION

A questionnaire study evaluated the people's perception of orthodontics by putting forward four questions, and the responses were noted.

From the above study, it can be concluded that lack of awareness is the main factor that keeps people away from undergoing orthodontic treatment. Self-perception of orthodontic treatment motivated only a small percentage of the study population.

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Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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