

INTRODUCTION: The disabled children such as physically, mentally and socially handicapped are neglected by their own nearest and dearest ones as well as society. This negligence adversely affects the psychological status of disabled people which in turn affects the oral health.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of oral health education program on oral health status among hearing impaired special children aged 5- 15 year old in Madurai City.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The study population was selected from two available institutions for hearing impaired, in Madurai city. The final sample consisted of 217 subjects and the age range of study participants varies from 5 to 15 years old of both genders. After collecting the baseline data, oral health education and motivation was imparted at different time intervals with the help of visual aids and demonstration method. Fones method and Modified Bass method of brushing were taught to the children. Oral health status was assessed by using WHO proforma 2013 at baseline and after the health education at 3 and 6 month intervals. The oral health awareness was assessed using a self administered questionnaire at the beginning and end of the study. Data were analysed using chi-square test, Wilcoxon signed rank test, Kruskal walis test, Friedman test and Mann Whitney U test.

RESULTS: At baseline, the mean gingival bleeding, DMFT and dft scores were 0.96, 2.64, and 2.21 respectively. At the end of 3 months and 6 months there was a significant decrease in gingival bleeding. No significant difference was seen in DMFT and dft at different time interval. The oral health awareness increased significantly at the end of the study when compared to the baseline scores.

CONCLUSION: The present study proved that hearing impaired children can maintain an acceptable level of oral hygiene when taught with special customized methods like multisensory approach with creative use of other senses.

DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE: Hearing loss among school going children create a major impact on their life and the present study showed that prevalence of caries, gingival bleeding and traumatic dental injuries were most common among Hearing Impaired children. In-service training in the promotion of good oral health for children with hearing impairment, access to oral health care has been provided for teachers, institutional staff and parents of these under privileged children of god.

KEY WORDS:

Oral health education, Oral health status, Hearing impaired children