ABSTRACT

Aim and Objective: To assess the attitude and awareness of athletically active children (6-12 years old) regarding sports related oro-facial injuries, their emergency care, and the effectiveness of mouthguards in prevention of sports related oro-facial injuries.

Materials and Methodology: 160 athletically active children belonging to the age group of 6-12 years practicing Boxing, Football and Martial arts (Karate, taekwondo, judo) were selected from various sports academies in and around Chennai. A relevant questionnaire aimed at identifying the perception, awareness and attitude of children regarding oro-facial injuries and the role of mouthguards in prevention of sports related oro-facial injuries was distributed. From the responses received the data was analyzed.

Results: The present study findings showed a predominant male participation (80.6%) in sports activities compared to the female children (19.4%) with all sports played under the supervision of the coaches(100%) and majority of the children(59.4%) having a knowledge regarding the risk associated with the sport played. Majority of the children 114(71.25%) were aware of mouthguards, coaches (72%) and media (28%) was the main source of information. At the start of the study only 49 children (30.62%) were using mouthguards, following counseling and intervention 142 children (88.75%) were using mouthguards regularly and felt it helped in minimizing the risk of
sustaining oro-facial trauma and were willing to use it continuously and recommended it to others as well in contrast to 18 children (11.25%) who used them occasionally. 5(3.12%) children among the 18 who were occasional users sustained oro-facial injury.

**Conclusion:** The results showed that the need for mouthguard implementation is of critical importance. Dentists play a major role in promoting mouthguards for persons involved in contact sports and to educate the children, parents, teachers, and coaches regarding sports related oro-facial injuries prevention and management.

**Keywords:** *SPORTS PARTICIPATION, DENTAL TRAUMA, EMERGENCY CARE, MOUTHGUARD, PREVENTION.*