

Pratheepkumar V., Farhan B.A.

ORAL HYGIENE AND BRUSHING HABITS AMONG STUDENTS: A SURVEY STUDY

Tutor: PhD, associate professor Borisevich Y.N.

*Department of General Hygiene
Belarusian State Medical University, Minsk*

Relevance. Oral hygiene is crucial for students transitioning from parental care to independence, as poor habits can lead to dental issues and affect academic performance. Understanding student's oral hygiene practices can inform targeted interventions and educational programs, highlighting brushing habits, dental visit frequency, and attitudes towards oral health.

Aim: this survey study is to assess the oral hygiene habits and brushing practices among students, including the frequency and techniques used, as well as the factors influencing their oral care behaviors.

Materials and methods. A structured questionnaire distributed online among 63 university students in Belarus, responses collected anonymously to encourage honesty and improve the reliability of the data, data analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize responses and identify trends. More than 50 articles about Oral hygiene from PubMed and Google Scholar released in the time frame between 2010 to 2025 were analyzed.

Results and their discussion. The survey revealed that 35 (55.5%) of students brush their teeth twice daily, aligning with dental health recommendations. 20 (31.7%) brush once daily, a better practice than not brushing at all. However, 8 (12.7%) brush less than once a day, a concerning frequency as inconsistent dental hygiene practices can increase the risk of cavities and gum disease. Only 10 (15.9%) of respondents brush for less than 2 minutes, which is recommended by dental health professionals. The majority 36 (57.1%) spend between 2 and 3 minutes, which is considered adequate. However, 17 (27.0%) spend more than 3 minutes, indicating that while longer brushing isn't harmful, it's crucial to maintain effectiveness and avoid unnecessary wear on teeth or gums. Respondents revealed a significant gap in dental floss usage, with 31.7% regularly using it and 68.3% not, suggesting educational initiatives to promote flossing alongside brushing. The survey revealed that 79.4% of students have consistent access to essential oral hygiene products, indicating that lack of resources is not a barrier to maintaining proper practices. However, approximately 20% experience inconsistency in access, which could affect their ability to maintain good oral hygiene, emphasizing the need for continued efforts to ensure reliable access to dental care products.

63.5% of students are aware of dental health education, indicating a significant portion of the student population has access to information about oral hygiene practices and preventive care. 36.5% of students are unaware of dental care guidelines, indicating a need for educational initiatives. The survey shows that 39.7% visit dentists every six months, 31.7% once a year, and 28.6% only when necessary. Nearly 40% follow recommended care guidelines, but 28.6% may neglect preventive measures, leading to severe dental issues in the long run.

Conclusions. The survey indicates that while many students have good oral hygiene habits and resources, 12.7% brush less than once a day, increasing the risk of cavities and gum disease. Most brush for adequate time, but a significant portion exceeds 3 minutes. Dental floss usage is limited, and access to essential oral hygiene products is consistent but inconsistent. Dental health education awareness is high, but 36.5% are unaware, suggesting a need for targeted outreach and educational programs. Dental visits are varied, with 39.7% visiting every six months.