

# Oral Health of Pregnant Females in Rural Ajmer, Rajasthan: Awareness and Practice

Deepika Singh<sup>1</sup>, Bharti Prakash<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Zoology, S.P.C. Govt. College, Ajmer - 305001, Rajasthan, India.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Zoology, S.P.C. Govt. College, Ajmer - 305001, Rajasthan, India.

Corresponding Author: Deepika Singh

## ABSTRACT

Pregnancy is a complex physiological state which brings about different hormonal changes in a woman's body which may adversely affect oral health. The present study aimed to assess the level of oral health awareness and oral hygiene practices among pregnant women in rural population of Ajmer city. A cross-sectional survey was conducted in which preliminary study was done. A structured interview questionnaire was used. 40 pregnant women were examined to assess awareness and practice regarding oral health. Majority of respondents (87.5%) were not aware about connection between oral health and pregnancy. (82.5%) of respondents did not maintain their oral hygiene practices during pregnancy. This study revealed that there is a lack of dental awareness and oral hygiene practices among pregnant women of rural population of Ajmer city.

**Keywords:** Oral health, Pregnancy, Awareness, Oral hygiene practices.

## INTRODUCTION

Emphasizing on oral health care during pregnancy has been recognized as an important public health issue worldwide. [1] Pregnancy provides an ideal opportunity to improve women's health practices. Plaque is a sticky, colourless film of bacteria that covers the surface of the teeth. In case of poor oral hygiene, plaque can even harden into tartar and may increase the risk of gingivitis, a condition with symptoms of red, swollen and tender gums that are more likely to bleed. [2] This study provides a small vision into the current situation of oral health care awareness and practices among pregnant women in raising dental education during pregnancy. The study aimed to assess the awareness and practices of oral health during pregnancy in rural population of Ajmer district, Rajasthan.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was a cross-sectional survey conducted in which preliminary study among the pregnant women of rural population of Ajmer city was done. Ethical Clearance was obtained from the institutional ethical committee Medical and Health Research Ethics committee of Medical College, Ajmer. Written consent was obtained from the pregnant women who were willing to participate in the study. The respondents were selected from three Child Care Centres (Anganwadi Kendra) and one Government Community Health Centre of Ajmer city over a period of six months. 40 pregnant women in first and second trimester out of 65 were included in this study. The details regarding oral health awareness and practices were obtained by using interview questionnaire. The data were analysed using the Microsoft Office.

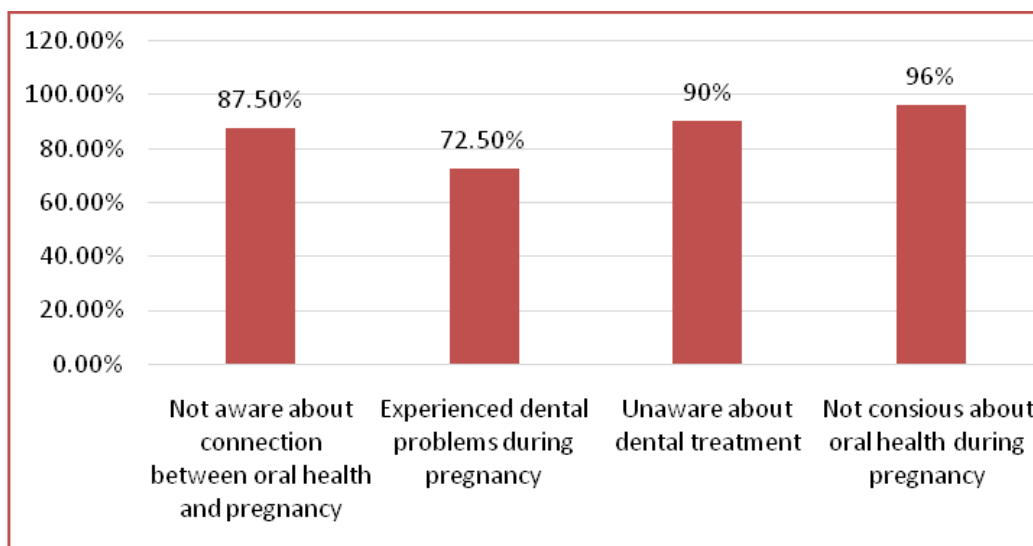


Figure 1: Oral health awareness among pregnant women

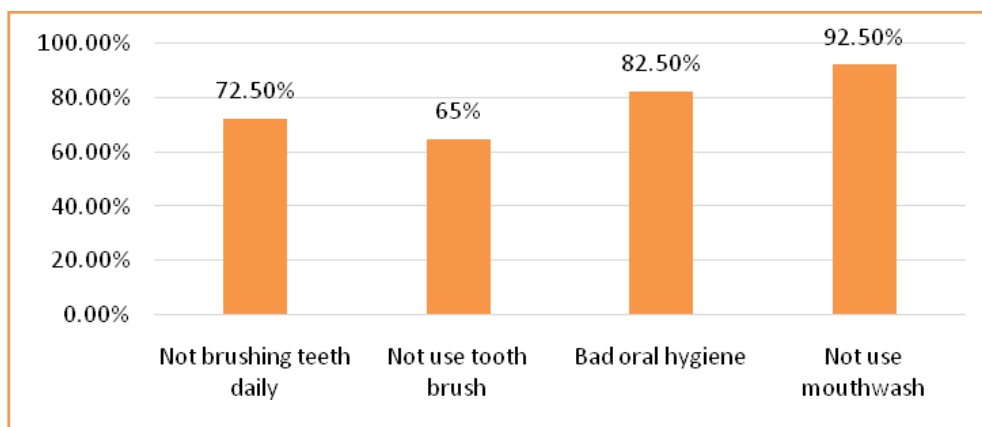


Figure 2: Oral hygiene practice of pregnant women

## RESULTS

Majority of respondents (87.5%) were not aware about connection between oral health and pregnancy. They were not educated regarding the impact of oral health on pregnancy. Majority of respondents (90%) were unaware of the dental treatment during pregnancy. (80%) respondents had experienced dental problems. (82.5%) did not maintain this oral hygiene practice during pregnancy. Majority of respondents (72.5%) were not cleaning their teeth daily with the best available tooth cleaning aid. (92.5%) of respondents did not use of mouthwash. The results of present study showed that more than half of the pregnant women did not know about the dental health problems during pregnancy. The frequency of brushing and use of mouthwash was also found to be less in them. The current results revealed that the awareness about oral

health and hygiene practices was found to be lower in first trimester of pregnancy.

## DISCUSSION

In the present study, (72.5%) respondents experienced dental problems during pregnancy. Majority of respondents (96%) were not conscious about oral health during pregnancy. (65%) of respondents did not use toothbrush. It was also observed that pregnant women from rural area gave less importance to oral health during pregnancy. Therefore, there is an urgent need for dental education and motivation of expectant mothers of rural group about the association of oral health and pregnancy.

## CONCLUSION

There is a significant evidence of lack of awareness and practices of oral health care during pregnancy in rural group.

It is essential to increase the current and future dental awareness and oral health care programmes to educate the pregnant women in rural areas in order to maintain good oral health which is helpful in reducing dental disease.

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