

ORAL HYGIENE IN THE PHILIPPINES: A BASIS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS

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INTRODUCTION

A large percentage of the population in the Philippines, specifically 87% suffer from tooth decay and 43% have gum disease, which suggests that many Filipinos neglect their oral health. Neglecting oral health can result in chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, which are among the leading causes of death in the country. Additionally, it can also have negative effects on one's social life and career as it can lead to low self-confidence, which in turn results in unemployment. Therefore, promoting good oral hygiene practices in communities may contribute to addressing these challenges and ultimately lead to community development, progress, and economic development. However, to implement effective programs, it is important to understand first people's perceptions and actual practices, motivating the researcher to conduct this study.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the perception of Filipinos towards importance of oral hygiene.
- To determine the practices of Filipinos towards oral hygiene in terms of toothbrushing, replacement of toothbrush, and going to the dentist for a check-up.

RESULTS

Table 1. Importance of Oral Health as perceived by Filipinos

Question	Not important	Somehow important	Important	Very Important	Mean
How important is oral health to you?	0	0	104 16%	560 84%	3.84 = Very High Importance

Table 2. Adherence of Filipinos to the frequency of visiting the dentist

Question	Never	Once every two years and above	Once every year	Once or more every 6 months	Mean
How often do you go to the dentist for a check-up?	97 15%	262 39%	124 19%	181 27%	2.59 = Almost Adherent

Table 3. Adherence of Filipinos to the prescribed frequency of tooth brushing daily

Question	Irregular, sometimes not in a day	Once a day	Twice a day	Mean
How many times do you brush your teeth every day?	26 4%	73 11%	565 85%	3.16 = Almost Adherent

Table 4. Adherence of Filipinos to the prescribed time spent in brushing the teeth

Question	Less than an minute	A minute	2 minutes	Mean
How much time do you spend brushing your teeth?	34 5%	163 25%	467 70%	2.65 = Adherent

CONCLUSION

Although in general the Philippines observes proper oral hygiene and have a positive attitude towards it, Filipinos still need to improve their compliance in some areas, particularly visit to the dentist to ensure that their oral health is fine. Additionally, with the consequences of poor oral hygiene such as but not limited to tooth decay, gum diseases, oral cancer, and chronic diseases among many others that also negatively affect one’s socioeconomic condition, though it is only 5-25%, which is a small portion of the population, these are still risks faced by some Filipinos with their poor oral hygiene practices, hence, something that the government must address with haste.

REFERENCES

Luczon, N. (2022). Tooth decay, gum diseases still prevalent in 87% of Pinoys: DOH. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion-USA (2022). Oral Health Conditions. Basics of Oral Health. Peres, M. A., Macpherson, L. M. D., Weyant, R. J., Daly, B., Venturelli, R., Mathur, M. R., Listl, S., Celeste, R. K., Guarnizo-Herreño, C. C., Kearns, C., Benzian, H., Allison, P., & Watt, R. G. (2019). Oral diseases: a global public health challenge.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design taking on quantitative research approach was employed, involving 664 Filipinos from various parts of the Philippines who were selected randomly. A questionnaire was distributed to gather data needed, while Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and Analysis of Variance were computed to analyze and interpret data after it have been collected. The following criteria guided this study:

- One should visit the dentist once every 6 months
- To maintain healthy teeth, one must replace his/her toothbrush once every 3-4 months
- One should brush his/her teeth 2 times a day
- To ensure that one's teeth will be thoroughly cleaned, he/she must brush teeth for at least 2 minutes.

Table 5. Adherence of Filipinos to the prescribed frequency of replacing their toothbrush

Questions	Once every year	Once every 5-6 months	Once every 3-4 months	Mean
How often do you replace your toothbrush?	50 8%	158 24%	456 68%	2.62 = Adherent

Table 6. Significant Difference between adherences to prescribed oral hygiene practices and respondents' age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Importance of Oral Health	Between Groups	.685	2	.343	2.614	.074
	Within Groups	86.265	658	.131		
	Total	86.950	660			
Adherence to the prescribed frequency of visit to the dentist	Between Groups	10.511	2	5.256	4.568	.011
	Within Groups	757.077	658	1.151		
	Total	767.589	660			
Adherence to the prescribed frequency of brushing the teeth daily	Between Groups	.153	2	.077	.330	.719
	Within Groups	152.585	658	.232		
	Total	152.738	660			
Adherence to the prescribed duration of brushing the teeth	Between Groups	1.658	2	.829	2.519	.081
	Within Groups	216.614	658	.329		
	Total	218.272	660			
Adherence to the prescribed frequency of replacing toothbrush	Between Groups	1.259	2	.630	1.623	.198
	Within Groups	255.367	658	.388		
	Total	256.626	660			

Table 7. Significant Difference between adherences to prescribed oral hygiene practices and respondents' sex

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Importance of Oral Health	Between Groups	.007	1	.007	.053	.818
	Within Groups	86.943	659	.132		
	Total	86.950	660			
Adherence to the prescribed frequency of visit to the dentist	Between Groups	.369	1	.369	.317	.573
	Within Groups	767.219	659	1.164		
	Total	767.589	660			
Adherence to the prescribed frequency of brushing the teeth daily	Between Groups	1.837	1	1.837	8.023	.005
	Within Groups	150.901	659	.229		
	Total	152.738	660			
Adherence to the prescribed duration of brushing the teeth	Between Groups	.073	1	.073	.220	.639
	Within Groups	218.199	659	.331		
	Total	218.272	660			
Adherence to the prescribed frequency of replacing toothbrush	Between Groups	.038	1	.038	.099	.753
	Within Groups	256.588	659	.389		
	Total	256.626	660			

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Community-level programs that directly inform people of the consequences of having poor oral health, so these programs would be highly influential and would really result in realizations.. These programs must target parents and children.
- Further studies are needed to fully understand the situation in the Philippines, particularly in determining the gap between government actions and the actual situation in communities..