

Association between mothers' utilization of oral health care and oral health status of their toddlers in Kota Bharu district, Kelantan

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Dental utilization is viewed as the primary marker of oral care and mothers' attendance pattern and denominated as an indicator of dental attendance and oral health in young children. The objective of this study is to determine the oral health care utilization of mothers, their toddlers' caries status and the association between the toddlers' caries status and mothers' utilization pattern in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. **Materials and Methods:** This is a cross sectional study with participation of 185 pairs of mothers and toddlers that visited Mother and Child Health clinics in Kota Bharu. A validated self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data on mothers' oral health care utilization and the oral health status of the toddlers was assessed by clinical examination using standardized dental chart form. The data analysis was performed using SPSS. **Results:** Majority of participants are Malay. The mean age of mothers was 31.6 (6.09) years old. Approximately 38% claimed they had visited a dental clinic less than a year ago despite only 13% of the mothers having gone for a regular oral health check-up. Most of them (80%) utilized government facilities. Three quarters of the mothers perceived that having a dental examination is not scary. Among the toddlers, 52.4% of them were male with mean age of 2.31 (1.06) years old. One and two toddlers having repaired cleft lip and cleft palate consecutively. Nearly half (49.2%) have good oral cleanliness. For caries status, 53.6% were caries free with decay, while the mean number of missing and filled teeth was 2.95 (4.35). No statistically significant association was found between caries status of the toddlers with the mothers' oral health care utilization pattern. **Conclusion:** It is imperative to encourage mothers to have a routine dental check-up jointly with their family members to achieve better deliverance of preventive care for better oral health status amongst children predominantly in Kelantan.