Effectiveness of an Oral Health Information, Education, and Communication Material on Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Caregivers of Kindergarten Pupils in Manila, Philippines

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Objectives: It has been recognized that the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of the caregivers affect the children's oral and general health. Prevention of oral diseases, like caries, can be achieved by providing oral health education (OHE) to caregivers, specifically mothers. Health educators have agreed that they are an important target group for OHE being "key figures" that provide the greatest influence on their child's life. This study intended to use and test the effectiveness of an Oral Health Information, Education, Communication (IEC) material which aimed to increase the caregivers' oral health KAP that would lead to dental visits of the children, regardless if symptomatic or not.

Methods: A one-group pretest-posttest design was used in the kindergarten classes of a public school in Manila, Philippines. The study utilized bilingual (Filipino-English) information sheets, pre- and post-test questionnaires after a 21-day period, and an Oral Health IEC material. Descriptive statistics were used to present and analyze the gathered data from the caregivers of kindergarten pupils.

Results: Though a low response rate of 9.93% was obtained (N=302) in the study, the respondents have displayed adequate level of knowledge, positive attitude, and good practice before the use of the IEC material. Significant improvement was noted with the post-test after the 21-day follow-up period. A change in practice was observed wherein 13.33% of the respondents sent their child/ward to the dentist regardless if symptomatic or not.

Conclusions: The Oral Health IEC material used was effective in increasing the KAP of the caregivers. Factors like dental pain, advice from friends/family, and the caregiver's personal decision have contributed to the child's dental visit after the 21-day period. The results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population due to the low response rate.

Keywords: IEC material, primary teeth care, dental visit, kindergarten pupils, caregivers