

Children's oral care, luxury or urgent necessity

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Global Overview: Statistics of oral diseases, caries specifically, in children and adolescents are as high as 90% in some countries. Taking in consideration its consequences as infections, pain, premature tooth loss and malocclusions. At the end it affects the child and his family's quality of life negatively.

Parents Perception: High percentage of people think that dental care for a child is a luxury treatment for those who are wealthy. Parents do not give their children oral care a priority as long as the child has no serious complains. For some it's the high cost of dental treatments, for others its hesitation to expose the young child to unpleasant dental experience. Not to forget the misperception that primary teeth will fall down and be replaced eventually and requires no treatment.

Health Care Providers Perception: Health care providers in pediatric departments and Obstetrics should have an effective rule in parental education and referral of patients who require any dental care. Unfortunately, even some general dentists refuse to see a very young child in their clinic for many reasons.

Decision Makers/ Governments: Decision makers in many countries underestimate the effectiveness and efficiency of dental preventive measures. Strict application of it will lower the oral disease prevalence in their population. Treatment of advanced oral diseases that could have been prevented in the first place makes a huge financial burden on governments.

Time to Take an Action:

- a. Dentists play an important role in parents' education in regard to children's oral care.
- b. Strict preventive programs to be legislated in maternity and children hospitals as well as in schools.
- c. Insurance companies can be very selective in covering dental treatments.

Biography

Samia Al-Khuwaitem, Pediatric dentist from Saudi Arabia, Dammam city. She holds a bachelor degree in dental surgery (BDS) & Master degree in pediatric dentistry from King Saud University, College of Dentistry, Riyadh City. Also, holds a certificate in dental practice management from University of Toronto, Canada. Worked as a part-time faculty in Princess Nora Bint Abdulrahman University, College of Dentistry, Pediatric Dentistry department. She has a clinical experience in pediatric dental practice over 8 years. She is the member of the Saudi Dental Society (SDS); Member of the Saudi Society of Pediatric Dentistry (SSPD); Member of the American Association of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD). She is also Founder of the first specialized pediatric dentistry private center in Saudi Arabia. She is interested in public education about oral care for children through social media and public events.

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