

Abstract:

To assess the oral health knowledge, attitudes and practices of the parents/guardians of pre-school children in Moshi, Tanzania. Design: Cross-sectional study. Setting: Moshi Municipality, Kilimanjaro region, Tanzania. Subjects: Parents/guardians of 372 randomly selected 3-5-year-olds. Results: There were 174(46.8%) respondents (156 parents and 18 guardians) aged between 20 and 78 years (mean age 35 ± 2.0). About 76% of the respondents were in the older age group (over 30 years), 79.9% were married, 63.2% had primary education and 79.9% were either professionals, farmers, skilled technical workers or in business. There were sugar moments reported by the parents/guardians for children with temperaments. Although oral health knowledge was generally poor, more parents/guardians with secondary education showed relatively better dental knowledge than those with primary education ($p < 0.05$). More than 75% of the parents/guardians gave positive responses in regard to maintaining teeth for life for themselves and for their children. A moderate number of respondents 75(43.1%) reported supervising their children during tooth brushing. However, majority (92%) said that their children brushed less than twice a day. Most of the parents/guardians (63.8%) reported no detrimental habits that can lead to functional traits of malocclusion in their children. Conclusion: Some parents/guardians practiced sugar moments on their children which were not significantly associated with early childhood caries. The oral hygiene knowledge and practices were inadequate. Most of the respondents were positive about the need to conserve natural teeth for themselves and for their children