

Study finds eight in ten children in India suffer from oral health problems

- *Survey conducted by KANTAR IMRB reveals startling insights into the oral health condition among children in India*
- *Highlights stark disparity between the reality and parents' perception of their children's oral health*

Mumbai, 04 September 2019: A new national study by KANTAR IMRB for Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited revealed that at least **8 out of 10 children in India suffer from oral health issues**, underscoring the need for immediate action. Some of the major oral health problems found in children surveyed include visible plaque accumulation, white spots on teeth, visible caries, gum inflammation, bad breath and gum bleeding. The survey revealed that as many as 2 out of 3 children have cavities or are at a high risk of developing them. The study also highlighted that around 9 out of 10 adults surveyed suffer from a major oral health problem.

The study highlights that the high incidence of oral health issues in children was recorded across the country - **East India (89%), West India (88%), North India (85%) and South India (64%)**. Some of the large cities also exhibited high incidence of oral health issues - **Mumbai (90%), Kolkata (93%), Hyderabad (82%), Delhi (79%), Chennai (60%) and Bangalore (46%)**.

Another finding from the survey was the significant difference between the actual dental health condition of children and the state of their oral health as believed by their parents. This evident disparity is mostly driven by low awareness about how crucial oral health is to their children's overall wellness. At least **8 out of 10 parents** surveyed believed that their children have healthy teeth, while a dental examination found that around **80% of those children actually suffer from at least one oral health problem**. This gap between reality and parents' perception of their children's oral health is most prominent in **Kolkata (92%)**, followed by **Mumbai (88%)** and **Hyderabad (80%)**.

The study also revealed that most children in India do not follow essential oral care practices such as brushing twice daily and regular dental check-up. More than **70% of children surveyed do not brush their teeth twice a day** and more than **60% of them have not been taken to a dentist in the past one year**. Moreover, the survey pointed out that 8 out of 10 children who consumed sweetened products daily suffer from oral health issues. Around 44% of children surveyed need major dental treatments such as restoration, root canal or an extraction.

“Most parents don’t know that milk teeth in a child need to be cared for from the time they erupt in the baby’s mouth. These teeth contribute significantly to the toddler’s overall growth, allowing the child to chew nutritious food while encouraging adequate development of the jaws. This lays the foundation for strong permanent teeth and a healthy smile. The high incidence of cavities and oral health problems in children has its roots in poor care of milk teeth.” stated, **Dr. Meenakshi S. Kher, Member, The Indian Society of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry (ISPPD)**.

Expressing concern about the insights brought up by the survey, **Dr. V Gopikrishna, President, Indian Association of Public Health Dentistry (IAPHD)** stated, “This study highlights the state of Oral Health in the country, calling out for an immediate need to increase awareness. Numerous other scientific studies also strongly interlink poor oral health to several other health conditions such as diabetes, preterm low-birth-weight and atherosclerosis, among others. It must be remembered that effective management of dental diseases and good oral hygiene can lead to strong teeth, which can improve the overall wellbeing of an individual.”

Survey methodology

The survey was conducted by KANTAR IMRB among 2,030 adults and 1,080 children belonging to diverse socio-economic backgrounds across 12 cities in India, viz. Delhi, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar and Patna. The study was conducted at Colgate dental camps in these cities, each with two dentists, along with representatives from KANTAR IMRB. In each camp, respondents were first interviewed by KANTAR IMRB representatives about their oral health and then guided to a dentist who carried out a thorough dental examination. Finally, respondents were provided with a dental card with details of their oral health.

Key takeaways from the study:

(A) Findings on children:

- Every **8 out of 10 children** in India suffer from a major oral health problem.
- **Two out of 3 children** in India either have cavities or are at a high risk of developing them.
- Only **7% of parents** in India proactively took their children for a routine dental check-up in the past one year.
- **Seven out of 10 children in India did not visit a dentist** in the past one year. Among them, 81% suffer from a major oral health problem and 68% suffer from cavities or are at a high risk of having them.

- **A majority of children surveyed do not brush their teeth twice daily.** Among children who brush once in a day, 82% face a major oral health problem and 69% have cavities or are at risk of having them.
- Among children who eat sweetened products daily, 81% suffer from a major oral health problem and 67% have cavities or are at risk of having them.
- About **44% of children surveyed need vital dental treatments** such as restoration, root canal or an extraction.

(B) Findings on adults:

- About **9 out of 10 adults** surveyed suffer from a major oral health problem.
- More than **76% adults** in India either have cavities or are at a high risk of developing them.
- More than **7 out of 10 adults** surveyed **claimed to have healthy teeth.** Among them, **89% suffer from a major oral health problem,** 77% have cavities or are at risk of having them.
- **Among adults who brush only once daily, 95% of them have oral health problems** and 83% have cavities or are at a high risk of developing them.
- **Six out of 10 adults surveyed did not visit a dentist in the past one year.** Among them, 90% have oral health problems and about 80% have cavities or are at a high risk of developing them.
- **A majority of adults surveyed need vital dental treatments** such as restoration, root canal or an extraction.

About Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited: Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited is the market leader in Oral Care in the country. The company manufactures and markets toothpastes, toothpowder, toothbrushes and mouthwashes under the 'Colgate' brand, and a specialized range of personal care products under the 'Palmolive' brand. Colgate has been ranked as India's #1 Most Trusted Oral Care Brand for the eighth consecutive year, from 2011 to 2018, by The Economic Times - Brand Equity - Most Trusted Brands Survey, conducted by Nielsen. Colgate has been ranked as the Most Trusted Oral Hygiene Brand by TRA's Brand Trust India Study Report for the ninth consecutive year, from 2011 to 2019. For more information about Colgate's business and products, visit www.colgatepalmolive.co.in