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ABSTRACT

Halitosis Self-Perceptiveness, Knowledge, and Attitude among Al-Quds University Students

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Background: Halitosis is a universal problem that interferes in everyday social life. Self-perception of this problem may vary according to age, the young are more sensitive toward this issue and more ready to treat it.

Halitosis can affect individuals by creating communication problems along with psychological and social effects that are proposed in everyday life interactions and it is a multifactorial origin that can be physiological or pathological with systemic causes (ENT infections, liver diseases, kidney disorders, etc.) or local causes (plaque, tongue coating, faulty restorations, etc.) but mainly due to lack of oral hygiene.

A lack of knowledge and training regarding halitosis creates challenges for dentists to manage it, realizing the need to dedicate education about halitosis at both graduate and professional education levels. Moreover, the need for awareness regarding oral health practice helps reduce the issues arising in the oral cavity.

Objectives: This study aims to evaluate Oral hygiene, self-perceived halitosis, Halitosis knowledge, and attitude of students at Al-Quds University in Palestine.

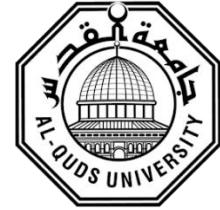
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Methods: A cross-sectional study using a self-administered questionnaire validated from previous studies and translated to Arabic will be distributed to medical, dental, pharmacy, and health professions students from Al-Quds University.

The questionnaire consists of forty-three questions divided into six sections that include eight questions on sociodemographic, six questions on self-awareness, eight on attitude, twelve on oral health practice, four on knowledge, and five on willingness to manage halitosis.

Google Forms, and Facebook Inc. are going to be used to distribute the questionnaire to university students' groups. The minimum sample size is 328 students.

Results: A total of 359 surveys were analyzed for this study with a response rate of 94.7%. The majority of our sample were Females (n= 274). The prevalence of self-reported halitosis in our

study was 67.4% (n= 242). All specialties have shown a similar concern toward bad breath and how it affects them socially and personally (approximately 54%). When asked to do an on-spot breath exam 13.9% of students reported an unpleasant smell (n= 50). Sixty-four percent of students considered their oral hygiene practice as “good” and sixty-eight percent have evaluated their oral health as “fair” although 68% don't use dental floss among their oral health routine. Out of 81.8% of students using chewing gum, 75.7% use it to freshen bad breath. The majority of our sample believe a dentist is qualified to treat malodor (n= 346, 96.4%), 40.7% would use good oral health procedures that include brushing and mouth rinsing along to visiting the dentist to manage halitosis; forty-eight students reported they have visited a dentist to seek treatment and 82% of our sample are willing to see a doctor to treat halitosis. Yet, 8.3% preferred to manage bad breath problems by wearing a face mask (n = 30). Students have shown good knowledge on some local and systemic causes of halitosis but 39% have questioned the caffeinated drinks and sinus infections to be a local cause. They also disagreed on the hepatic, renal, and obesity as a cause of halitosis (68%, 52%, 65% respectively). On willingness and readiness, there is a hesitance in informing others on their bad breath issues (n= 255, 71%) although only 38.9% feel the need to avoid others with this issue.



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Conclusion: Although students are quite aware of halitosis, still more education on causes and management should be enhanced to alleviate their confidence in their relationships and daily life. Dentists play an important role in encouraging good oral health practice that includes flossing, tongue brushing, and mouth rinsing to impact the self-perceived problem. Furthermore, The understanding of the fact that halitosis can be considered as a natural process due to a daily routine but also a body indicator for many diseases will strengthen readiness of students to investigate and advise others for a better healthy life.

Research Keywords: Halitosis, knowledge, attitude, self-perceived halitosis, Oral Health practice.

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