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ABSTRACT

Palestinian Pregnant Women's Knowledge, Attitudes, and practices of infant oral health and their own: a cross sectional study

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Background Pregnancy presents unique physiological changes, including hormonal fluctuations and dietary shifts, which may affect oral health. Although prior research highlights the importance of oral health during pregnancy and its potential impact on maternal well-being and fetal development. Yet, there is a scarcity of comprehensive research focusing on the oral health of pregnant women in Palestine. In our previous study, we were able to identify the lack of knowledge of pregnant women in Jerusalem city. However, there hasn't been any research on the rest of the West Bank and Gaza areas, and little is known about pregnant women's awareness of infant oral health. Thus, this cross-sectional study aims to assess the oral health knowledge, attitudes, and practices of pregnant women; simultaneously exploring their awareness of infant oral health. The goal is to identify potential gaps in knowledge that could affect future oral health practices in various geographic areas.

Methods: An observational cross-sectional study will utilize a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from pregnant women who attend their routine prenatal care appointments at a selected Palestinian maternity and childhood clinics. The survey will be conducted at various private and government clinics across different regions of Palestine, including: (Nablus, Bethlehem, Jenin, Tulkarm, Hebron, Ramallah).According

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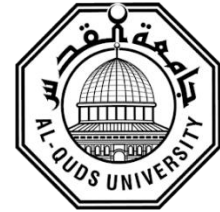
to the inclusion criteria, the clinics should be healthcare equipment. In addition to that, we will be targeting the clinics based on their availability for scheduling appointments throughout the week, excluding holidays. The survey is structured into five sections: Demographics, Pregnant women's knowledge of infant oral health and their own, Attitude, Oral health practices, and intended infant behavior. Demographics part includes Age, Education Level, Household Income, Current Residence, Number of Children, Employment Status, and Trimester of pregnancy, Reported complications during present pregnancy, Health Insurance Coverage, Number of Previous Pregnancies, and oral health information sources. We adopted a validated survey from previous literature. Data will be analyzed using IBM SPSS statistics. Utilizing methods like Chi-square tests, frequency distribution tests, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), in line with pertinent literature.

Research question: What are the levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices concerning infant oral health and maternal oral health among pregnant women in the West Bank?

Objectives: our Primary aim is to assess the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices among Palestinian pregnant women regarding infant oral health and their own. The Secondary Objectives are to compare findings across geographic regions, and across private and government clinics, and to evaluate the effect of information-receiving and information sources on KAP.

results: we are still in the data collection phase, currently a total of 406 women completed the survey from the north. 33% from Tolkarm 32% from Jenin 18% from Nablus and from the center 17% from Ramallah. The average age is 26. Furthermore, half of the mothers have a bachelor's degree, however, 78% of the participants are housekeepers. Regarding the trimester, 22% are in the first trimester, 29% in the second, and the remaining half are in the third trimester

Most of the women have experienced pregnancy before, 70% have at least one child. Only 34% of the participants received information about oral health during pregnancy, predominantly from the dentist



Concerning the participants' awareness, this figure illustrates that approximately half of the expectant mothers express uncertainty regarding the impact of a mother's poor oral health on the baby's birth weight. as well as half of them are unsure if the Cavities in young children start with white spots on the teeth.

Regarding the attitude of pregnant women, the majority of them acknowledge the safety of routine dental care, including checkups and cleanings, during pregnancy. However, most believe that pregnancy may contribute to tooth loss in women.

A total of 261 expectant mothers know that cavities in a child's teeth can lead to additional health complications.

Conclusion: The findings of this study imply that pregnant women generally do not have sufficient knowledge and attitudes regarding oral health during pregnancy and infant oral health.

Efforts should be undertaken to recommend regular visits to the dentist during pregnancy and its safety.

A critical need to boost proactive engagement by dental practitioners and gynecologists in providing dental awareness for pregnant women, as they play an integral role in delivering information and advancing oral health knowledge within the pregnant population.

To give all potential mothers a mandatory university courses about oral health during pregnancy also the oral health of the infant.

Keywords: Oral health, Pregnant Women, Infant oral health, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices Awareness, Information Sources, Palestine.