

Knowledge Assessment of Noma among Dental Professionals in Gombe State

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INTRODUCTION

NOMA, also known as Cancrum Oris is a severe and aggressive gangrenous process (a condition where the body tissues die due to infection or lack of blood supply) that affects the mouth, nose, lips and face. Noma is an opportunistic infectious disease that mainly strikes children below the age of five. A combination of different factors leads to its development, poverty being most important, malnutrition (both past and present), poor oral hygiene as well as measles and malaria (Feller et al., 2007).

This fatal disease is particularly prevalent among children in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated frequency of 1 to 7 cases per 1,000 individuals. Noma usually begins as an ulcer on the mucus membrane at the alveolar margin of the mouth and rapidly spreads into other parts of the mouth, including teeth, jawbone, cheek, tongue, lips, and nose. This eventually results in extensive necrosis and destruction of soft tissues and bones. It is a disease that can be prevented if the predisposing factors are

known and addressed adequately (Ogbureke & Ogbureke, 2010). The objective of the study was to assess the knowledge level of Gombe state dental professionals

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a cross sectional survey study at Gombe state using all the dental facilities in the state. The study population were 180(106 males and 74 females) and a sample size of 70 participant were selected across different dental professionals. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the participants. A self-developed questionnaire was distributed for a period of two weeks and a 100% return rate was recorded. The total score for the domain was obtained and categorized as low (less than or equal to 50%) and good (51% and above). Frequency and percentage were used to present the results after coding and analyzing.

RESULTS

The gender distribution of the participant's knowledge revealed that male has good knowledge than female with 25(35.7%) having good knowledge while only 15(21.4%) females were having good knowledge of the disease. Participants within the age range of 31-40 has the highest level of knowledge with 21(30.0%) of them having good knowledge. Location distribution of the participants revealed that professionals in the rural area has good knowledge with 24(34.4%) having good knowledge while 16(22.8%) of urban professionals has good knowledge. Dentist has the highest level of knowledge with 7(100%) having good knowledge while Dental technicians has the lowest level of knowledge with 8(16%) having good knowledge. The study revealed that the overall knowledge level of the professionals was good with a 57.14% level of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The awareness of Noma among the study population was good. Those that were aware of the disease have an average knowledge of it, however, a good number of the participants don't have good background knowledge of the disease therefore, there is a need

for Continuous Medical Education among the Dental professionals in the state.

Recommendations

1. Continuous Medical Education should be encouraged across all the dental facilities of the State.
2. The state government should create Dental Epidemiology unit which will help in fighting Neglected Dental Tropical Diseases.
3. Community awareness on Noma should be encouraged within the state.
4. The State government should partner with the relevant authorities in the fight against Noma

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