

Attitude Towards Replacement of Missing Teeth Among the Patients Visiting Nobel Medical College and Teaching Hospital

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Abstract

Introduction: Teeth play a significant part in the maintenance of a healthy personality and an affirmative self-image. Tooth loss is psychologically a very traumatizing and upsetting experience, and is considered to be a serious event in the life of a person, requiring significant psychological readjustment.

Objective: Evaluate the prosthetic status and attitude of the patients towards replacement of the teeth among the patients visiting dental department, Noble Medical College and Teaching Hospital (NMCTH)

Materials and Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted over a duration of 6 months to determine prosthetic status and attitude of the patients towards replacement of the teeth among all patients visiting Department of prosthodontics, NMCTH. The inclusion criteria was all patients with at least one missing tooth (excluding third molars) and subjects who gave consent for the study.

All the Patients were provided with six close ended questionnaire followed by clinical examination by a well trained investigator.

Result: The total number of participants was 297. Of them 157 were male and 140 were female. Most frequently encountered age group was 21-30 years Of these, 80.8% of individual were provided with proper information about replacement of teeth whereas 19.2 % were not. 70.7% individual said they will replace only when they find difficulty in their daily activities. 64.6 % of individual wanted to replace teeth for appearance, 20.5% for function and 14.8% for both appearance and function. 79.5 % stated financial problem and 18.2% stated lack of awareness regarding not replacement of teeth.

Conclusion: The patients' attitudes and demand towards the replacement of missing teeth might be different from the clinicians' assessment. We consider factors such as the preservation of natural teeth and the maintenance of periodontal health as priority but patients tends to prioritize comfort in mastication and improvement of esthetics. Therefore, it is vital to investigate patients' awareness, need and demand on prosthodontic treatment options.

Key words: Attitude, missing teeth, psychology, prosthesis

Conflict of Interest: No

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Introduction

The face is widely regarded as one's own sense of self-image, dignity or prestige in social contexts and smile is considered as a window into one's personality.¹ Teeth play a significant part in the maintenance of a healthy personality and an affirmative self-image of an individual.² Tooth loss is psychologically upsetting experience, and is considered to be a serious event in the life of a person,

often requiring significant psychological, biomechanical and social readjustment.³

There are several options available to the patients to replace the missing teeth. Broadly there are two types of treatment modalities available, removable and fixed prosthesis.⁴ The choice of prosthesis for replacing missing teeth is determined by various factors, such as patient's age, education, gender, medical or psychological conditions, level of income, primarily the number of teeth being replaced, quality of ridge and alveolar bone, patient's choice etc.^{5,6}

The level of awareness and perceptions among patients toward dental restorations and replacements vary in different cultures and populations. A study done in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reported that subjective perceptions of esthetic and functional treatment needs were highly variable among the male patients.⁷ Other survey conducted in Hyderabad India, reported the patients awareness for diverse treatment options for missing teeth was low.⁴

With the rapid improvement in oral health and the reduction of edentulism in many countries, increasing numbers of people are retaining more teeth later in life. In Nepal, the data on attitude of patients regarding replacement of missing teeth is limited. Therefore the purpose of this study was to assess the factors which determine the replacement of missing teeth among the patients visiting Nobel Medical College and teaching hospital.

Materials and Methods

This is a cross-sectional study conducted to determine the prosthetic status and patients' attitudes about replacement of missing teeth in the department of prosthodontics, Nobel Medical College and teaching hospital, Biratnagar over a period of 6 months Jan 2017 to June 2017. All the patients with at least one missing tooth (excluding third molars) were included in the

study after they were informed of the nature of the study and gave their consent. The patients below the age of 18 were excluded from the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Ethical Committee.

A six-item, closed-ended questionnaire was used to record the responses, followed by a clinical examination in which existing and missing teeth were charted and prosthetic option opted by patient were recorded. A single trained investigator recorded answers from the patients followed by a clinical examination.

Data collected were patients' age, sex, number of teeth missing, reason for loss of teeth, patient's knowledge about replacement of missing teeth, reason for replacement of teeth, importance of replacement of teeth, reason for not replacing teeth and type of prosthesis preferred by patient.

Data collected were entered in spss software and descriptive analysis was done using frequency distribution.

Result

The total number of participants was 297. Of them 157 were male and 140 were female (Fig. 1). Of these, 80.8% of individual were provided with proper information about replacement of teeth whereas 19.2 % were not (Fig 2). When questioned about replacement of teeth, 70.7% individual said they will replace only when they find difficulty in their daily activities whereas 29.3% declined about replacement of teeth (Fig 3).

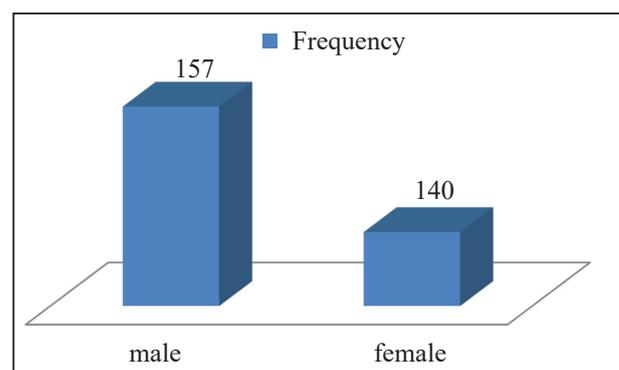


Figure 1: Number of Participants in the study

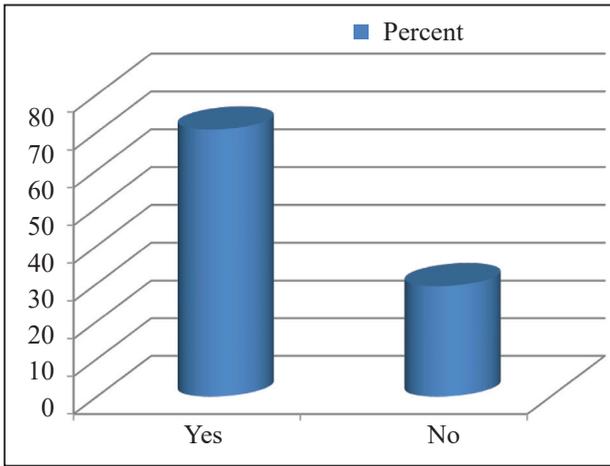


Figure 2: Questionnaire - Did the doctor give you a proper information about the replacement of tooth?

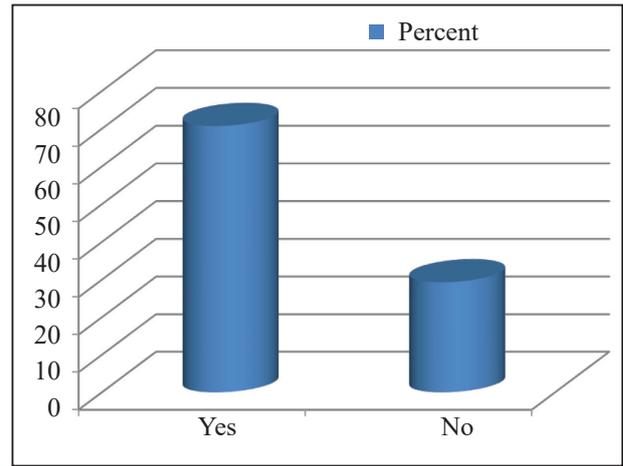


Figure 3: Questionnaire - would you replace your teeth only if you find some difficulties into your daily activities?

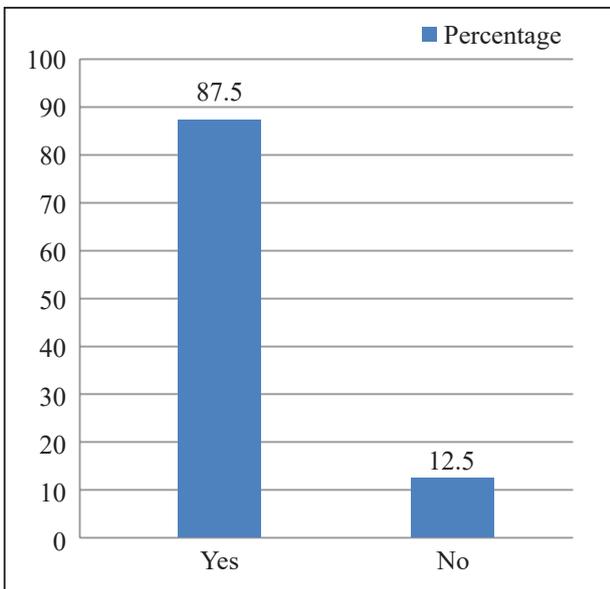


Figure 4: questionnaire - are you aware of importance of replacement of teeth?

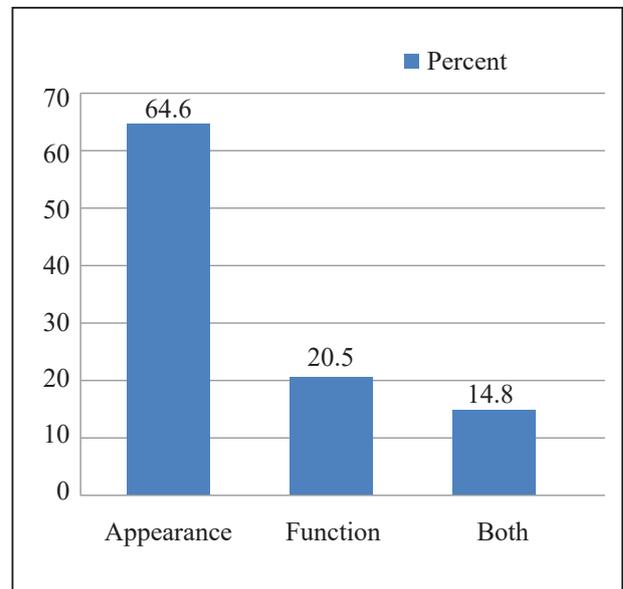


Figure 5: questionnaire - What is your reason for your replacement of tooth?

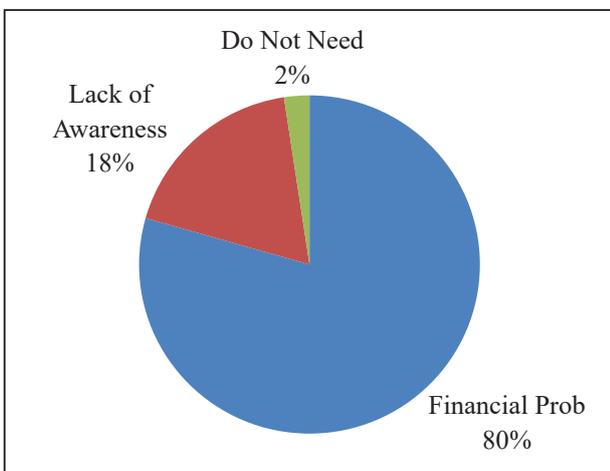


Figure 6: questionnaire Why are you not replacing your tooth ? It is due to

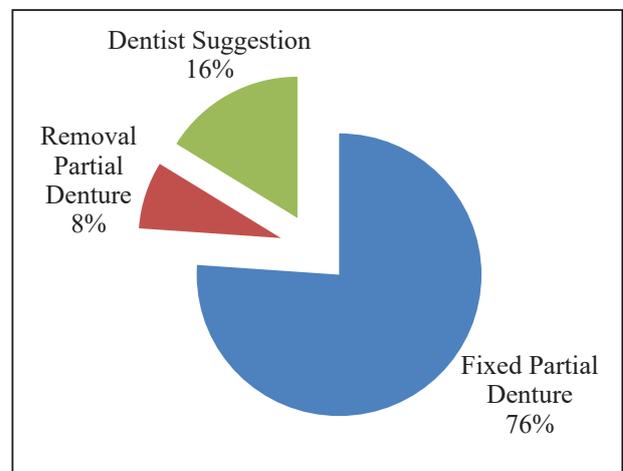


Figure 7: questionnaire What type of a denture do you prefer?

When questioned about importance of teeth replacement, 87.5 % told they were aware and 12.5% said they are unaware of importance of teeth replacement (fig 4). When asked about reason for replacement of teeth, 64.6 % wanted to replace teeth for appearance, 20.5% for function and 14.8% for both appearance and function (fig 5). When asked about reason for not replacing of teeth, 79.5 % stated financial problem, 18.2% stated lack of awareness and 2.4 % stated they don't feel the need to replace (fig 6). Most frequently encountered age group was 21-30 years 20.2%.

Discussion

Healthy mouth is essential for social, economic, and personal development of individuals. Missing teeth need to be replaced not only to maintain the masticatory function and esthetic of patients but also to reinstate the psychological impact of missing teeth on patients' general well-being. Teeth are required for mastication, phonetics, esthetics, structural balance and for the comfort of an individual. With the loss of teeth, the above functions are impaired.⁸

The present study aimed to assess the factors which determine the replacement of missing teeth among the patients visiting Nobel Medical College and teaching hospital.

There was male predominance in our study. The age of the patient ranged between 18 to 75. Most frequently encountered age group was 21-30 years. Our findings are in accordance with Abdurahiman et al. This might be due to the fact that younger individuals are more educated and exposed to media.⁵ Dentists are the first persons the patient encounters for their tooth problem. They serve as driving forces for the patient's awareness about the replacement of tooth. In present study, 80.8% of individual were provided with proper information about replacement of teeth whereas 19.2 % were not. These findings are similar to the study conducted

by Raj BJR and Faiza et al.⁹ Mukatash et al. also carried out a study in Jordan and found that the major source of information for patients is dentists.¹⁰ Mobile dental clinics, dental camps, and prosthodontic outreach programs are possible solutions to change attitudes, spread awareness, and extend treatment.

When questioned about replacement of teeth, 70.7% individual said they will replace only when they find difficulty in their daily activities whereas 29.3% declined about replacement of teeth. We found that the decision of tooth replacement is strongly associated to the location of the absent tooth. According to Leake et al. patient's subjective needs for replacement of teeth, especially posteriors, is mostly low as they rarely improve the social status.¹¹

When questioned about importance of teeth replacement, 87.5 % told they we aware and 12.5% said they are unaware of importance of teeth replacement. These findings were similar to study conducted by Reddy et al.⁸ When asked about reason for not replacing of teeth, 79.5 % stated financial problem, 18.2% stated lack of awareness and 2.4 % stated they don't feel the need to replace. Most of the participants with negative attitudes had responded that they didn't feel that it is required to get the missing teeth replaced and the second most frequent reason given for the negative attitude was financial constraints.¹²

When asked about reason for replacement of teeth, most of the patients preferred replacement of tooth for their aesthetic problems rather than the functional problems. Elias and Sheiham found that patients are more likely to seek replacement of a missing anterior tooth than a posterior tooth, and rated aesthetics above function in their priority for tooth replacement.¹³ Osterberg et al. reported that an individual's subjective need for the replacement of missing teeth was based mainly upon esthetic rather than functional factors.¹⁴

Most of the patients preferred fixed partial denture as they felt it was similar to natural teeth in function and appearance. Our study claims that patients' demand for fixed prostheses is at a higher level when patients were educated on the issue and that dentists have a duty to spend time on educating patients regarding available prosthetic options.

Conclusion

The patients' attitudes and demand towards the replacement of missing teeth might be different from the clinicians' assessment. Although we consider factors such as the preservation of natural teeth and the maintenance of periodontal health as priority, patients tend to prioritize comfort in mastication and improvement of esthetics. Therefore, it is vital to investigate patients' awareness, need and demand on prosthodontic treatment options.

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