

**EFFECTIVENESS OF ORAL HEALTH
EDUCATION ON PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN AND
ORAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND
PRACTICE OF CAREGIVERS**

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ABSTRACT

A quasi-experimental study was carried out in Basic Education Middle Schools at rural areas of Magway Township to study the effectiveness of oral health education on knowledge, behavior and oral health status of primary school children and to assess awareness and practice on oral health of caregivers. A total of 220 school children and 220 caregivers participated in this study between 2015 and 2017. Self-administered questionnaire was used. Data for tooth brushing method among the school children was collected by direct observation. Oral health status in terms of dental caries, gingival health and oral hygiene was assessed. Data were collected before and after intervention in intervention and control groups. Oral health education was provided at eight weekly interval for one year to the school children in intervention group. The results showed that significant difference was found between the two groups in oral health knowledge of school children at after intervention ($p < 0.001$) and also in behavior at before ($p = 0.045$) as well as after ($p < 0.001$) intervention. Regarding oral health status, significant difference was found between the two groups in Community Periodontal Index scores for unhealthy gum and Plaque Index scores for poor oral hygiene at before as well as after intervention ($p < 0.001$) except mean Decayed, Missing, Filled tooth scores ($p > 0.05$). Among the caregivers, significant difference was found in oral health attitude ($p < 0.001$) but not in knowledge and practice ($p > 0.05$) between the two groups, before intervention. Attitude on oral health of caregivers and oral health behavior of their children were associated ($p = 0.031$). Among the school children in intervention group, retention of mean knowledge and behavioral scores were 2.45 ± 1.12 , 3.79 ± 1.12 , 4.07 ± 0.98 and 1.56 ± 0.90 , 3.60 ± 1.21 , 3.24 ± 1.31 at baseline, at one year after education and at six months after cessation of education respectively, and oral health education had significant effect on total knowledge and behavioral scores ($p < 0.001$). It is concluded that oral health education was positive effect on knowledge, behavior, gingival health and oral hygiene except dental caries among the school children. The attitude towards oral health of the caregivers plays a role on oral health behavior of their children.