

Knowledge, Values and Practices of Chinese Parents Regarding Childrens' Dentition

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Chinese are the largest Asian population in the US. New York is second only to California in terms of its Asian population. Oral health knowledge and perceived importance of the primary dentition may affect care-seeking behaviors and thus the oral health of Chinese children. Objectives: The purpose of this study was to assess Chinese parents' oral health knowledge, values and practices regarding their children's oral health. Methods: A survey instrument was specifically designed for this study and translated/back-translated into Chinese. Most items were adapted from previous validated instruments. The survey instrument was pilot tested prior to the inception of this study and analyzed for face and content validity. A convenient sample was recruited at the largest community-based health center in Chinatown, New York. Frequencies as well as bivariate analysis were conducted. Results: A total of 154 Chinese parents/caretakers completed the self-administered survey. The mean age of participants was 38.4 (SD \pm 10.97); 83% were mothers; and 82 % were born outside the US. The majority of participants (66%) considered their children's primary teeth to be very important; whereas their oral health knowledge scores were relatively low [mean score = 4.22; (SD \pm 2.06); range 0-10]. Most (79%) have taken their child to visit the dentist within the last year. Bivariate analysis revealed that knowledge scores, income and the belief in a relationship between oral health as a child to adult oral health were significantly associated with the perceived importance of primary dentition ($p < 0.05$). Oral health education during pregnancy, perceived importance of primary teeth, and level of education and income were significantly associated with knowledge scores ($p < 0.05$). Conclusion: Although this group of Chinese parents have relatively low oral health knowledge; they hold the importance of children's teeth in high regard and seek care regularly. Supported by NYU Dean's Student Research Award.

(Abstract, AADR Conference, 2006)