

## Dental Knowledge, Attitudes and Behavior of Pediatricians in Jeddah City

### Abstract

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Early assessment of the oral health status of children and timely intervention have the potential to reduce or even eliminate the effects of oral and dental diseases. However, parents rarely take their children to dentist early enough to control dental diseases. On the other hand, parents contact pediatricians even before the child is born and during his life multiple times. Thus pediatricians are considered a perfect and reliable source for oral health control and prevention.

The aim of this study is to measure the dental knowledge, attitudes and behavior (KAB) of pediatricians in the City of Jeddah regarding oral health status and methods for prevention of dental diseases in children. The factors that mostly affected pediatricians' KAB, including demographic, academic and practice related characteristics were also identified.

**Material and method:** A questionnaire comprised 40 questions including demographic and KAB's questions was distributed to all pediatricians in Jeddah city. A Score was given for each question giving a total knowledge score that ranged from 0 to 13. Total attitude scores ranged from 0 to 6 while the total behavior scores ranged from 0 to 11. Percentages of total scores of KABs were compared. Relations between the KAB's scores and different study variables were investigated

**Results:** The response rate of pediatricians in Jeddah city (363) was 60%. Their mean age was 39.57. Ninety-two point three percent were either Saudis or Arabian Subjects. Pediatricians' KAB were found to be unsatisfactory. The most important observation was that the concept of oral health prevention was deficient. Pediatricians' awareness of fissure sealants, fluoride, dietary counseling, time of first dental visits and thumb sucking were quite limited. The two main factors that significantly affected KAB's scores were the pediatricians' qualification and dental information received. Consultants and others who received dental information during the last five years showed the highest scores. However, pediatricians' age, nationality, country of graduation and years of experience significantly affected their attitude and behavior but not their dental knowledge.



Conclusion: Over all, pediatricians' dental KAB are quite inadequate. However, increasing their awareness of oral health through formal and informal means of dental education seems to be promising.