

Research Article

**A cross sectional study on knowledge of school children
regarding personal hygiene**

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the knowledge of school children regarding personal hygiene.

Material and methods: In this cross sectional study, total 100 school going children were selected from March 2017 to September 2017. Assessment of knowledge regarding personal hygiene was assessed.

Results: In present study total 91% were children having knowledge about personal hygiene, 98% students used water for cleaning of perianal area, 51% children took bath daily, 90% students brushed their teeth once a day and 18% students were washed daily uniforms.

Conclusion: They did not possess the knowledge about importance of personal hygiene but were not practicing it on ground.

Keywords: Knowledge, Personal hygiene, Primary school

INTRODUCTION

Hygiene is a set of practices performed for the preservation of health. According to WHO hygiene refers to situation and practices that help to promote and maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases. Proper hygiene protected from belongings, like germs and dangerous UV rays from the sun, in the environment that can hurt. Improver hygiene allows these things to affect the body and most likely make sick. According to the Centres of Disease Control and Prevention addressing the prevention of spread of germs in the schools is essential to the health of youth, schools and state. Good hygiene prevents the spread of germs. It also helps to give a good first impression and good feelings to others.^{1,2}

The school Health Program includes, all school health services, school health environment, school health education, and school nutrition programs.³ It was started by Government of Pakistan in 2010.

Its aims were to improve health of school going children's of Pakistan. It includes safe clean fresh drinking water, provision of gender and culturally appropriate sanitation and cleanliness. Toilet facilities, having adequate spacious airy class rooms, more comfortable seating arrangements and adequate and sufficient play grounds, a child friendly environment for mental and social health proper access for disabled and physically challenged, reduction in dropout rate, improvement of quality of education and learning outcomes, which improve the health conditions of young population, lastly disease control and an overall enhancement and improvement in health conditions in the society at large.⁴

The combination of adequate and sufficient facilities, truthful behavioural practices and education is a mean to have a positive impact on the health and hygiene conditions of a society as a

whole, both at the present and in the future. The success of a school hygiene program is therefore not determined only by the number of latrines constructed and the number of hand pumps installed or water connections built. Nor is a victory of a program determined just only by what children know. Knowledge that is not applied to hygiene manners in practice has no impact on health. Poor hygiene practices and insufficient sanitary conditions play major roles in the increased trouble and burden of communicable diseases within developing countries.⁵ School health is an important interference and intervention as a great deal of research tells us that schools can have a major consequence on children's health, by teaching them about health and promoting healthy behaviours. A child spends more time at school than anywhere else, except home. Schools are blessed since they provide an environment for acquire skills and development of aptitude and intelligence, which can be utilized by students to achieve their goals in life and build up as a good human being. A great deal of research tells us that school can have a major outcome on children's health by teaching about health and promoting healthy and well behaviours. Moreover, young children today have bigger dreams than ever before and they are eager to go the extra mile to achieve their dreams. However, we need to keep them healthy and strong so that they can stretch their wings and fly high. Hence, this study was planned to study common health problems and assess the status of personal hygiene in children of a private primary school in the urban areas.^{6,7}

This study is to evaluate the knowledge attitudes and practices about the personal hygiene among the students of primary school to find different facts and information responsible for the poor health of students which are responsible for various diseases.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this cross sectional study, total 100 school going children were selected from March 2017 to September 2017. Students of secondary school were excluded. The choice and number of students for this study were on the basis of feasibility, diversity and relative ease of obtaining permission from the institution. Each student was given equal number of proformas (12 each). Questionnaires were filled by interview method in which the researchers themselves filled the forms after questioning. The data was analyzed in SPSS-17.

RESULTS

Ninety one percent students were having knowledge about personal hygiene while 9% didn't (Table 1). Ninety eight percent students used water while 2% used paper for cleaning of perianal area (Table 2). Fifty one percent of children took bath daily, 41% after every 2 days and 8% weekly (Table 3). Ninety percent students brushed their teeth once a day, 6% twice a day and 4% thrice a day (Table 4). Fifty five percent of students cut their nails after 7 days, 15% after 15 days and 30% after 30 days (Table 5). Uniforms of 18% students were swashed daily while 35% and 47% of students had their uniforms washed twice a week and weekly respectively (Table 6).

Table 1: Frequency of knowledge of children about personal hygiene

Knowledge about personal hygiene	No.	%
Yes	91	91.0
No	9	9.0

Table 2: Frequency of use of materials for washing for perianal area

Materials used	No.	%
Paper	98	98.0
Water	2	2.0

Table 3: Frequency of timings of bathing/shower during a week

Bathing/Shower	No.	%
Daily	51	51.0
After every 2 days	41	41.0
Weekly	8	8.0

Table 4: Frequency of number of times students brush their teeth daily

Number of times brush	No.	%
Once	90	90.0
Twice	6	6.0
Thrice	4	4.0

Table 5: Frequency of cleaning and cutting of nails by children

Cleaning & cutting of nails (days)	No.	%
7	55	55.0
15	15	15.0
30	30	30.0

Table 6: Frequency of washing of uniform of students

Washing of uniforms	No.	%
Daily	18	18.0
Twice a week	35	35.0
Weekly	47	47.0

DISCUSSION

Personal hygiene is described as the principle of maintaining cleanliness and grooming of the external body.⁸ For good personal hygiene, hand washing is the most important thing specially before meals and after defecation. Use of soaps further enhances the hygiene.⁹ Neat and clean uniform and wearing of shoes also prevents harbouring of germs. Although children were washing their hands but use of soap was minimal.¹⁰ All these measures safeguard an individual from getting disease producing germs. Majority of children in our study were not abiding by all the above mentioned precautionary measures and hence were more prone to diseases. It is obvious that children were aware of personal hygiene and cleanliness but were not following it in a true spirit.¹¹ Most of them were not using soap or any other antiseptic material for hand washing. A vast majority of children was not brushing the teeth and cutting the hand nails. Similarly hand washing was not practiced by most of them after defecation and before meals. Majority were not wearing shoes and clean uniform. There is a need for proper implementation of school health program whereby health professional, in collaborations with teachers and parents should create awareness regarding practice of personal hygiene among school children. It will improve the overall health of the school children and make them resistant to common infections.¹²

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that they were not maintaining a proper personal hygiene. They did not possess the knowledge about importance of personal hygiene but were not practicing it on ground.

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